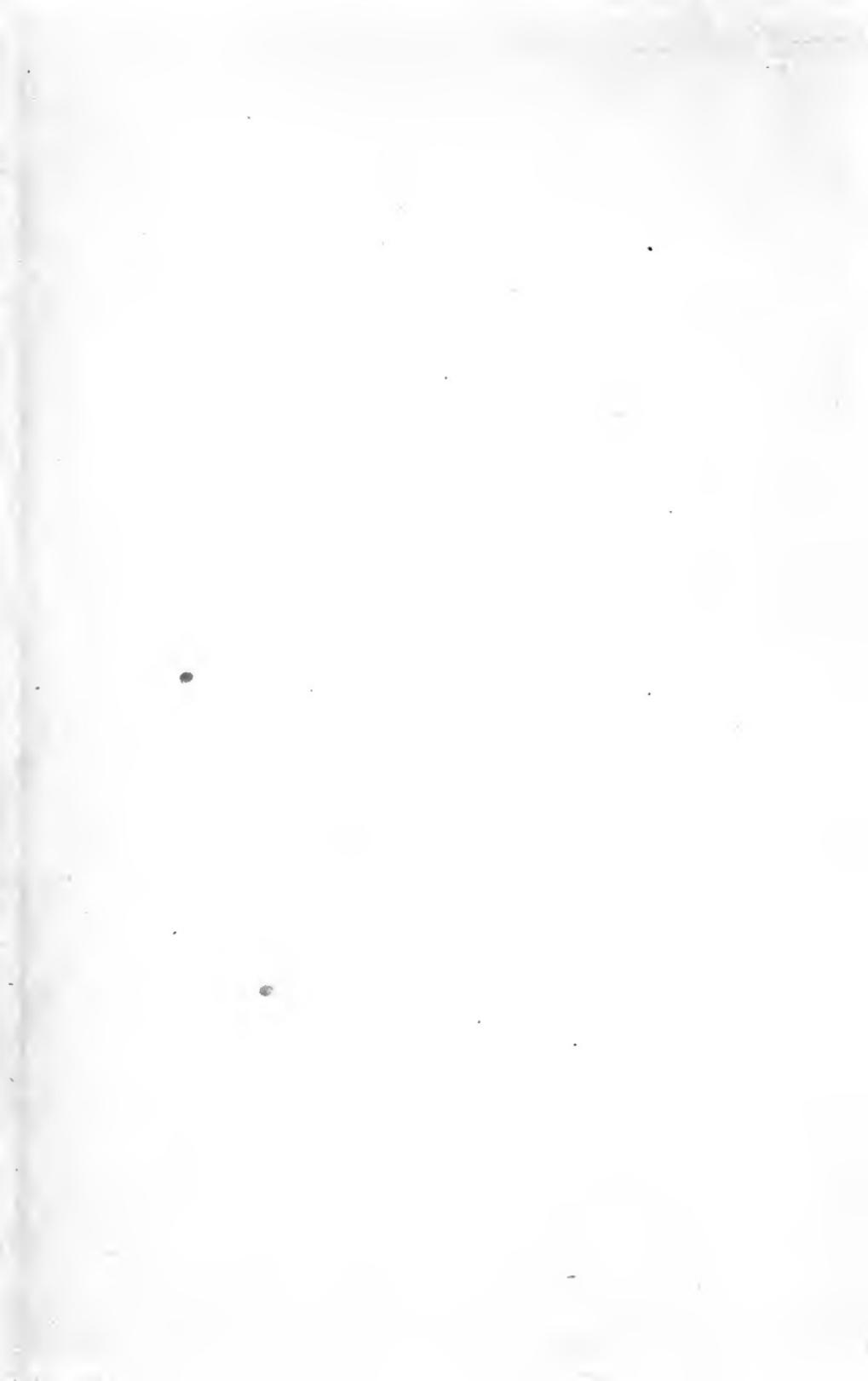
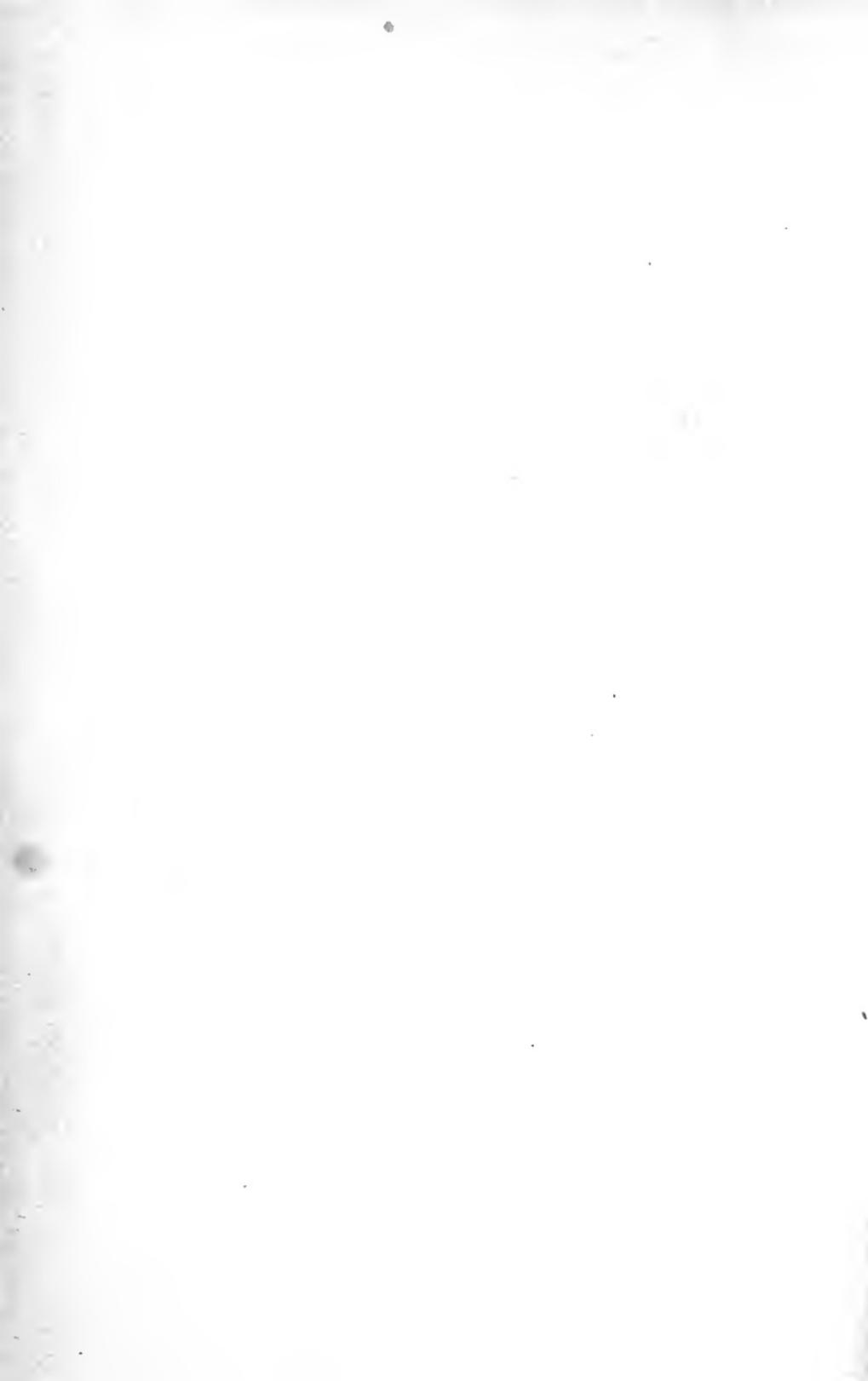


KATRINA
ROY ROLFE GILSON

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KATRINA



KATRINA'S DIARY

KATRINA

A STORY

By

ROY ROLFE GILSON

Author of

“In the Morning Glow,” “Miss Primrose,”
“The Flower of Youth,” *Etc.*



New York

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PART I

Katrina

I

A NEWSPAPER-MAN

AT ten o'clock, six mornings out of every seven, Larry McRae appeared in the managing-editor's doorway with six jokes, typewritten, in his hand. If his chief was in consultation with a political friend, he waited in the adjoining news-room, lounging cheerfully on the corner of a reporter's table, smoking cigarettes and exchanging those bantering observations with which most newspaper-men conceal what earnestness may dwell within them. Barely forty, his straight, dark hair was streaked with gray, hanging in unkempt locks about a shaven face, homely of feature, homelier still in its contending elements of expression — in its four winds, Larry doubtless would have said, could he have known those paradoxes which made his countenance curious and even fascinating to behold and impossible to forget. When he laughed,

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boisterously, his gray eyes twinkling through his glasses, his mouth wide open, his long, lean, coatless figure swaying with delight, he was like a schoolboy overgrown, while the next instant his sallow face might settle visibly into such melancholy lines of preoccupation and seeming care as would add years to him, or its early wrinkles might be gathered up into knots of keen sophistication, half-mocking smiles playing the while about his thin, set lips, and making him a little terrible to men with lies to tell, and even perilous to those younger members of the staff, fresh from college or the country printing-shop, trying their 'prentice hands at certain oft-told tales in quest of which all wise city-editors send the callowest youths at their command. Sweetly sentimental stories the youngsters make them, and sometimes true enough, however mawkishly they may be told, with their lorn heroines, young always and always pretty, easing their lives and loves away in garret chambers, ashes of roses mingled romantically with ashes of cigarettes. Larry himself has "done suicides" in his time, but has come up long ago into that higher journalism which deals

with politics — which, tapping, tapping upon its typewriters in a smoky little dingy room, there sits in judgment on an erring world. He calls grave statesmen by their Christian names, describes with gusto the strategy by which they rose or the waves of circumstance which swept them on; he knows who the kings are, those petty sovereigns in state and county, ward and town; knows how old feuds were fought, what issues stirred them, which colors won. What Larry remembers, the *Herald* recalls; what Larry discovers, the *Herald* points out; is the *Herald* prophetic? — behold our Larry! The future also is in his palm.

In Larry McRae the sense of humor,— without which no one may ever be a newspaper-man — was evident to every ear that caught his drolleries, and could be seen as well, lurking even in the pathos of that wilted face. His very gait — that long, low, sagging stride as he approached — would bring your smile; the words he drawled, those low, mysterious confidences which he had crossed the room to solemnly entrust you with, as if you, you out of all the world, would have the wit to com-

prehend — those suave comments upon Life, or Destiny, or the city-editor's new cravat, or the growing baldness of the religious-man, ending suddenly in a very asthma of delight ere he lurched away again on those limber springs of his, were irresistible, not always of themselves so much as of himself, though his printed jests in his little corner of the *Herald* called "Cap and Bells," quite unassisted by his presence, would stand the test of their little day.

Of the McRaes nothing was ever known at the *Herald* office save that they had been farming folk and that Lawrence, one of seven sons, had come to the city to make his way. From his own account, a vague and jocular Odyssey of his early wanderings, he had peddled books, he had plated silver by a patent process, he had been a street-car conductor, an insurance agent, a grocer's salesman, and had "taken tickets at the door." What door it was he did not say, but there one night, according to his story, he saw a vision: the sky grew black, lightning flashed and thunder rumbled, and suddenly he said, he saw himself in the midst of the tempest —

which on closer inspection appeared to be only tobacco smoke after all, with men at typewriters growling and striking matches and grinding out copy, so that he knew himself called of Heaven to be a newspaper-man.

His way, apparently, had been easier after that, save only once, perhaps, in the very midst of his promise when a strange moodiness fell upon him, when without resigning, without a parting word to a living soul, chief or comrade, he disappeared, no one knew whither. Six months had passed when he returned as suddenly as he had gone. The staff assembling one autumn morning discovered Larry tapping six jokes on his old typewriter at his accustomed desk. He was tanned by the sun and wind, but otherwise seemed quite the same. He returned all salutations of surprise and pleasure with his old good-humor, as if but the night had intervened, and without a word as to his absence, and never save once did he acknowledge it in any way. He had not even asked to have his old place back, but had re-taken it, calmly, at the usual hour, so calmly indeed, so casually, with an air above common things, that for a full minute his chief

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was speechless when he laid his jokes upon the desk.

“You back!” Bates managed, finally, to exclaim, and Larry nodded.

“Came in this morning — five o’clock — b-by freight.”

They let him stay. It was remarked that his face drooped more, that he laughed more seldom, that a certain buoyancy was gone, but his great good-nature remained the same, and even grew in a kind of grace. There was a mellower flavor in his “Cap and Bells,” not that his jests ever lost that keenness which proved his knowledge of his fellow-men, but they gained a ripeness which made them pleasant to recall, so that now and then one nobler or shrewder than the rest outlived the little bustling day for which he wrote it, and became tradition at the *Herald*.

After the *Herald* was out, in its last edition for the day, it was ancient custom for the youngsters to gather cheerfully where the cheese was free, and where, over pipes and beer, they were wont to prove (the more conclusively, the more they sipped) that Literature was not yet dead, or even sleeping, how-

ever paltry all modern books might be, but had her abiding place safely and happily enough in the humbler lodgings of the daily press. What, for example, could be better jesting than "Cap and Bells?" It was Elia himself come back to life again. Larry McRae was a better writer (cheese here) than any one-hundred-thousand-volume duffer of the past decade!—(here beer). What a novelist!—that is, if he only *would*—this lean Charles Lamb, this very Dickens of a fellow, with his knowledge of the street, the court-room, the council-chamber, the prison-cell, might be!

That he made no effort to vindicate these literary claims was explained variously: he was too busy, too indolent, too careless, too fond of his day's work, even too wise, it was declared, to play at such a bubble-blown pastime as writing books, though a certain pale, dark-haired person with soap-suds in his own young dreams was heard to say, in a spirit denounced as arrant jealousy, that Lawrence McRae knew far too well how fragile a reputation never earned might be, to risk its brittleness in any test. Suppose, for

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example, he should write a novel that was not so Dickensy as his friends — ?

Larry meanwhile, still at his desk, unconscious of all this junior chirping, is lost in the composition of those pithy paragraphs with which all self-respecting editorial columns dwindle away and lose themselves among the news and jests. They are akin in spirit to his "Cap and Bells" which he writes mornings, leaving his longer articles for the midst and turmoil of the day when all at once the news pours in from the globe's four quarters, crying for comment from the *Herald's* most trenchant pens. At five, however, he rises slowly into the tobacco laden air, slips on his coat, stuffing its pockets with all the journals he can lay his hands on, puts on his slouched hat, takes up his stick, and bowing suavely then to his colleagues in the little paper-littered room, he sometimes says in a voice that struggles beyond its depths:

"Young gentlemen, I bid you, one and all, a kind good evening."

The smiles that follow him as he stalks down-stairs are due in part to a boyish twinkle out of all proportion to the majesty of his

words and bearing, partly to the respectful attention he has won by years of such sagacious fooling, but more especially to the fact that three at least of the gentlemen he has just addressed are scarcely in that callowness which his words imply, one being bald, another gray, while to quote himself a third is moulting. The others indeed are beardless youths, but the inclination of Larry's head as he says farewell is rather to the older desk-men, his glance resting always with final and fondest emphasis on that shining pate, the tender possession of the *Herald's* dramatic-man, and as Larry said at the Press Club banquet: "Gentlemen, that outward and visible sign of his inward grace."

Where Larry pauses in his homeward journey is a matter compounded of politics and rye, but at dusk he is usually to be seen lounging alone up the gas-lit street, absorbed in thought, scarcely aware of the *Heralds* which the newsboys thrust upon him, all unconscious that they cry his wares. Sometimes he stops before shop-windows, preferably those where children linger, pressing their noses against the panes and gazing at the rainbow's farther end — no pot of gold, indeed, but pans

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of doughnuts dusted white, pies crackling at the edges if you but look at them, plum cakes and gingerbread, rows upon rows of those jellied and custarded inexplicables of every form and size, whose names doubtless are known to angels, but here on earth are the secret and savory knowledge of baker's men — favored and floury mortals of a wisdom so infinitely sweet it can be measured only by a child's young dream. Larry himself enters these palaces of delight to buy of doughnuts, one for himself and one for each nose whitened against the pane, and he may be seen then, mannerless, munching in the public ways. So discovered he retorts in answer to a cynic's smile — sings, with his mouth full —

“Dough, what a foretaste of glory divine!”

— and strolls on shamelessly, wiping the sugar from his lips.

Other persons buy and hurry homeward, jostling his elbows as they pass, frowning at his tardy pace. He has no need for such pressing ardor. No one waits or listens for *his* footsteps. Without anxiety, without eagerness, without emotion of any kind he may turn his corner in his own good time and so walk on

A NEWSPAPER-MAN

calmly to Mrs. Withers's door, behind which no one lurks, child or Indian, to clog his progress up the dingy and silent stair. He may find his laundry on the newel-post, but nothing more curious will intervene. He mounts slowly to his room, an alcoved chamber on an upper floor, meager enough in its boarding-house furnishings: bed and bureau and small wash-stand, an old stuffed chair in which he reads sometimes close to a window looking streetward, and a cluttered table by the register at which he writes, evenings or Sundays, on those rare occasions when his ingenuity can devise no better pastime than to stay at home. A few books are on his shelves, gifts or those stray novels and works on politics which he has chanced to review for the *Evening Herald*. A gaudy calendar, compliments of the Breitstein Brewery, hangs on his wall, and fading photographs adorn his bureau, arranged in a row along its top and tucked into corners of its glass. From the arm of the gas-jet dangle cravats of a dozen seasons, while the bureau drawers and a corner closet are more than ample, his best suit hanging upon his back.

“Sir,” said the Distinguished Guest at the

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Press Club banquet, bowing to Larry as he presided in a dress-suit borrowed for the night — “Sir, a newspaper-man is the knight-errant of these modern times of ours. His Lady is both young and fair, though her eyes are bandaged from the gay, false light of day. Like her ancient champions he may ride disguised (oh, Larry’s face!) He may ride clad rustily with device concealed, but he wears her favor on his stalwart arm, sir. He seeks high places — yea, enters the temples of the Lord’s anointed, *sans peur et sans reproche*, to thrust keen, lance-like questions there — and he rides back homeward from his quest to tell strange tales, evenings, before our fires.”

II

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

OWING to the insatiable curiosity of the *Herald* one April afternoon, Larry McRae, descending the stairs in a public school house, found himself going down step by step in the company of a little girl. The child, soon conscious of the perfect time they kept, for they were alone together and the hallway echoed with their chiming footsteps, tried to break them, but in vain, for when she lingered, he checked his pace, and when she hastened, he hastened too, till she reached the foot quite red and breathless — to find it raining.

The solemn stranger at her side, taking no seeming notice of her troubled face, gazed at the leaden sky and the patterning drops, and sighed impatiently.

“Oh, *sugar!*” he said, in a voice so mincing that the little girl tittered.

“What did you say?” he inquired.

“I didn’t say anything,” she replied faintly.

“Oh, I thought you spoke to me. Quite a rain we’re having.”

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“Yes,” said the little girl.

“You have no umbrella, my child. Which way do you go? You shall walk under mine.”

“Oh, no — no thank you, sir,” she said.
“I can wait till it stops.”

“Ah, then it will never stop,” he warned her. “Don’t you know, little girl, that if you wait for anything to begin or stop, it never does?”

“I wouldn’t say ‘never’,” was her reply.
“There are always exceptions.”

“Are there?” he asked. She was an odd, demure little thing, with calm gray eyes, and of a speech precise and lady-like; she was small for her words, he thought. “Now what, for instance?” he inquired.

“Well,” she began, “if one has patience, all things will come to one.”

McRae looked twice before he spoke.

“What makes you think so, little girl?”

She hesitated. It took some courage, but she said it bravely — “The Bible tells us,” and cast down her eyes.

McRae was silent. The rain poured harder and there was no sign of promise in the sky.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

“It *is* kind o’ slackening,” he observed slyly.

“I didn’t say it would stop all at once,” said the little girl. “Patience is more than just a minute.”

“How long is patience?” he inquired.

“Years sometimes,” was her reply.

“Dear, dear,” said the newspaper-man, raising his umbrella by way of astonishment. “I can’t wait that long. Will you come now, or shall I return for you — say, next spring?”

The little girl laughed.

“Oh, please don’t trouble,” she began —

“I am at your service,” he interposed gallantly “— any April. But you’d better come now.”

She looked at the rain which was falling dismally, and the more forlornly by contrast with his cheerful face.

“Which way, my dear?”

“It isn’t far,” she said, surrendering — and he tucked her, school-books and all, beneath his arm.

Both, at first, were a trifle shy, and they walked on silently, soberly, keeping step — till she burst out laughing.

“It’s like on the stairs, isn’t it?” she said.

“Yes,” he replied, smiling at the remembrance. “You *would* keep step with me. It was most embarrassing.”

“*I!*” cried the little girl, aghast. “Why it was *you*!”

“*I!*” said Larry.

“Why, yes,” she protested. “I *tried* to break step, but you kept just even.”

“My child,” he replied, “you must be mistaken. I wanted *you* to go ahead, so I lagged behind.”

“Why, that was what *I* was doing,” said the little girl. “I lagged on purpose to let you —”

“And, don’t you see,” Larry interposed, “both of us lagging, we kept just even, as you say. So *I* hurried on to get ahead of you.”

“Why, that was what *I* did,” said the child.

“Oh, you shouldn’t have done it,” he pointed out, “for don’t you see, just then I was hurrying on myself — so you kept us even.”

“It’s awfully queer,” the little girl said. “I had it right once, but now —”

She paused perplexed.

“— I can’t make it out at all. You’ve mixed me all up.”



BOTH AT FIRST, WERE A TRIFLE SHY

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

“Why,” he replied, “it’s quite simple; when I lagged, you lagged.”

“I know,” she answered, “but it doesn’t sound right someway.”

“Well, it doesn’t matter,” he assured her kindly. “It was quite unintentional, I am sure, and besides, to be quite frank with you, I am not at all sorry it occurred. A newspaper-man has very few chances to —”

He paused, astonished, for the little girl had withdrawn her arm.

“Are *you* a *newspaper-man!*” she cried, shrinking back into the rain.

“Why, yes,” he answered.

“Oh!” she replied. “I never would have come if I had known *that*.”

“Never would have come?” he repeated.

“But you looked so honest,” the little girl said. “I never *dreamed* you could be a newspaper-man.”

“A newspaper-man?” Larry inquired — they were stock-still in the middle of a cross-walk, in the rain — “why, what’s your objection to newspaper-men, my dear?”

“Oh, oh!” she replied, still gazing at him with fascinated, horror-stricken eyes — Red

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Riding Hood knowing the Wolf at last—
“Oh, I never should have thought it, you seemed such a gentleman.”

Larry smiled. He had been too astonished to do so before, and even now he quickly checked himself before that earnestness.

“My dear,” he said, “it is evident that you have never known many newspaper-men.”

“Oh, but I know all about them,” she replied, “and I think it’s dreadful to be one. Why don’t you stop?”

“Stop?” said Larry.

“Yes,” she went on. “I would if I were you. Why, I’d be a policeman — I’d be a — oh, I’d be *anything* before I’d be one.”

“Dear me,” replied the Wolf, gazing at the puddle he was standing in. “I had never thought of it quite that way before.”

“They lie so!” said the little girl.

“Lie so?”

“Why, yes,” she replied, “You can never believe a *thing* they say. And they drink so!”

“They do?” he inquired.

“And they swear and gamble,” the little girl said.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

“My, my!” he replied. “But you’re getting all wet. Let’s talk it over as we go.”

But the child drew back.

“Come,” the Wolf pleaded. “You might reform me.”

She joined him then, but gingerly, no longer walking with her hand upon his arm.

“You don’t *look* like them,” she conceded.

“How do they look? — that is, usually?” he inquired.

“Well, I’m not quite sure,” she replied, but I know they’re *yellow* kind of men. At least I’ve heard so.”

“But are all of them yellow, and so very dreadful?” he inquired.

“There may be nice ones, I suppose,” she replied doubtfully; “that is, young ones who have not been in it so very long. But the majority are just like Pullen.”

“Pullen?”

“Yes. He lived next door to us — used to, I mean — and he drank, oh awfully! And he beat his wife!”

“The wretch!” cried Larry. “And was this fellow Pullen a newspaper-man? I can’t believe it.”

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“He was,” said the little girl, “and Mrs. Gaylor says that they’re all alike. She knows too, for she’s woman’s-rights, Mrs. Gaylor is. Men can’t fool her, I guess.”

“No, indeed,” said Larry. “Isn’t it terrible?” The little girl bridled.

“I don’t think it’s so very terrible to be woman’s-rights.”

“Oh, no, of course not,” he assured her. “Quite the reverse in fact. But isn’t it terrible, I mean, that newspaper-men should be so disliked? Now I never knew one like Mr. Pullen — really.”

“Why even father,” she replied, “says that you can *never* trust them to get things straight.”

“Um,” said Larry. “There’s something in that. Still, I’ve known some very respectable newspaper-men. You may not believe me, but I have.”

“Well,” was her answer, “I wouldn’t *be* one. And if I *were* one —”

She set her lips.

“— Well, I’d go and shovel coal; I’d do anything; I wouldn’t care what I did — but I’d earn an honest living, somehow.”

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

The Wolf was silent.

"Have you no mother?" she inquired suddenly.

He shook his head.

"Or sister either?"

"No."

"Or wife?"

"Not even a wife," he assured her solemnly.

"Well, that's a blessing," said the little girl. "They'd feel so sorry."

And the Wolf gasped. The rain had stopped as they paused by her gate.

"I'm so obliged to you," she said, "and I wish you'd see father. He's awfully kind to people in distress."

Larry cringed.

"Thank ye, Miss," he said huskily. "*You* speak to the guvner: I ain't got the nerve. Jest ask him if he 'ears o' anything a honest chap could make his livin' at, to let me know, an' I'll never forget it, I tell yer that. I'm on the *Herald*, I am. Jest ask fer Larry — that's *me*, Miss. They all know Larry, you bet. They all know who I am. Well —"

He paused with an awkward attempt at gallantry.

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“I’ll bid yer good-day, lady, and may Heaven bless yer. I ain’t so low I don’t know me manners — I should say not. Here’s luck to yer.”

And he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

The little girl, her worst fears realized, had shut the gate in some trepidation and was preparing for a further flight.

“Good-by,” said Larry.

Something in his face — it beamed so humorously upon her — and the kindness of his altered voice now checked her steps, though she stood fearfully, uncertain whether she should laugh or cry.

“Oh!” she gasped, “You were only — ”

“Good-by,” he said again, more gently even than before. “But you haven’t told me your father’s name.”

“J — June,” she replied, still a little doubtful of all this courtesy.

“Not — not William June?”

“Oh! then you know my father!” she cried, smiling again.

He shook his head.

“And you?” he asked.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD

“I am Katrina.”

His eyes widened as he gazed at her, so earnestly that she dropped her own.

“Katrina,” he repeated, and added slowly, “so you’re Katrina? It’s a pretty name.”

“I’m glad you like it,” she replied, raising her eyes again. His own were upon her still, though now they had an absent look in them, and he spoke vaguely.

“What’s that?” he asked.

“I say I’m glad you like it — my name, you know.”

“True,” he replied. “Good-by, Katrina.” Taking her hand across the gate, he raised it gallantly to his lips.

“Oh, Mr. — Mr. Larry!” she said, blushing deeply. “I didn’t mean — I never said — you were not nice.”

III

THE CUB-REPORTER'S TALE

WHEN the staff of the *Herald* assembled at eight o'clock, the reporters, one by one, consulted an open diary lying on the desk of the city-editor and containing the first assignments for the day, while from their chief himself they received such additional directions, hints and warnings, and clippings from the morning press, as might be necessary for the interpretation of the tasks allotted them.

Addison Wrenn, innocent with youth and nervous on his new-fledged journalistic wings, cleared his throat and swallowed twice at least as he approached the Book in dread uncertainty of what was written there against his name. He was not a religious youth (he was a Unitarian — by birth) but he prayed, always, before he looked. Seemingly it was a harmless volume, a mere ledger-looking thing with its ruled pages and Harned's neat entries in purple ink, but Addison knew it for the man-trap that it was; a veritable cavern of a book,

THE CUB-REPORTER'S TALE

the shadowy entrance to a maze of passages leading, Heaven knows where, into the world, and every one of them the abode of Scoops — scaly monsters that pounce upon rosy-cheeked cub-reporters as they pass, groping their way into light of fame, or outer darkness. The Scoops are subtle demons and have the power of rendering themselves invisible to the naked eye — till three P.M. *At three, look out!* With a Perfecting roar they spring out suddenly from their basement lairs. They are inky-black and clammy to the touch. Some have five heads! — and you are lost forever. (They will pay you off next Saturday noon.) Even the little single-noddled ones are a match for a man. At three, then, take up your rival with trembling fingers. Scan it with a fearful eye, and a heart thumping against your ribs. *A-ha!* Claws at your throat, eh? They've got you; your *scooped*, my boy!

Addison's journalism was but four weeks old. He had yet to prove to his city-editor what he and his parents and a younger sister were certain of — that he had been ordained of Heaven to reveal some hitherto unsuspected beauties in English prose. He,

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it was, who wrote the prize-essay of his senior year, "Shakespeare: the Man," and he had published, in the High School *Meteor*, verse that was still remembered in those classic halls. Moreover, he had shunned and despised mathematics from his birth.

It was therefore with mingled hope and fear of opportunity that his eyes swept down the column of the day's assignments to find his name:

S. A. R. Annual Conv. Hotel Amer., 10 a. m.	Poore
Rep. County Committee, 11 o'clock	..... Fellows
Liquor Dealers' Association, Arbeiter Hall	Poore
Methodist Ministers (see Dr. Betts)	..... Poore
Fletcher Trial	..... Stevens
City Hall and Politics	..... Clarke
Board of Supervisors	..... Clarke
Police, Courts, etc.	..... Merrivale
Paynter Murder	..... Dunwoodie
See Senator Bayne — and watch Fox	..... Fellows
Postmaster Jones	..... Fellows
Federal Bldg and Moseley Hearing	..... Schneider
Halcomb Funeral	..... Schneider
John L. Sullivan in town	..... Potts
W. C. T. U. nude in art	..... Wrenn
Hell and Damnation	..... Wrenn
Old Historian	..... Wrenn

THE CUB-REPORTER'S TALE

"Perfectly clear, I suppose, Mr. Wrenn?" Harned inquired, without a smile, fixing his calm eyes upon the youth. Addison colored.

"Not exactly, sir."

"Why, it's plain enough," Harned remarked. "I understand the W. C. T. U. are getting up a remonstrance to the Park Board against the statues of naughty little boys with which it is proposed to ornament the new fountain in Yerrington Square. See that excellent lady, Mrs. Pope of Varney Street, and find out about it, and incidentally draw her out on the reform of art, and what its future is likely to become under the auspices of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Independent Women Voters' Association, in both of which she is a leading light. If she won't talk, try Mrs. Coy — Mrs. C. R. Coy, I think. You'll find her in the directory. Then take a run up to Dr. Weaver's — Weaver of the Pine Street Presbyterian — and ask him what he thinks of the action of this Oregon presbytery with reference to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Here's the clipping. You might go and see Dr. Bryce of the Universalist Church

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and get his views also. And here's another clipping."

Wrenn took it from Harned's hand and read:

"The committee reported unfavorably on a proposition to introduce a local history into the schools."

"This," he said inquiringly, "is from the
—"

The city-editor turned from his work again.

"Board of Education — last night," he murmured, and resumed blue-pencil. "But I don't want *that*, you know," he called out sharply as Wrenn retreated to his desk. "Who's written a history, and what did he do it for?"

Addison nodded, and stuffing his pocket with a handful of copy-paper, hurried away.

Three hours later he returned. Breathless from running up-stairs he appeared suddenly at Harned's elbow, and after waiting vainly for his chief to notice him, made his report into that busy editor's apparently heedless ear. It began with excuses.

"But I've got a corking story on the historian," he said.

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Harned raised his eyes, and gazed absently at the eager and perspiring face above him.

"Then why not write it?" he suggested mildly, and turned away again.

Addison Wrenn, journalist, began professionally: he lighted his pipe — with grave deliberation — and arranged his notes upon the desk. But the opening paragraph sorely afflicted him; the floor at his feet was quickly littered with discarded lines; he wrote with his pen gripped tightly in his hand, his face, in sympathy with every stroke, working with an expression of internal agony, dreadful to behold, and increasing visibly when his eyes, raised for a moment's inspiration, were panic-stricken by the office clock. It was half past twelve when he laid the formidable bundle upon Harned's desk and retreated to the farthest corner of the room. That he was a cub-reporter his furtive glances at the city-editor were enough to prove, and presently his face grew red. The corking story was in hand!

In an humble cottage with green blinds, on the outskirts of the town, dwells William June,

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with his only child, a sweet-faced, grave-eyed little girl who opens the door to you and bids you welcome with maiden modesty and dainty grace. One passing in the quiet thoroughfare would see but the plain board sign upon the house —

Private Tutor — Preparation for College Courses.

He would never guess what lies concealed behind those modest walls where the last morning-glories cling, laughing in the fall sunshine as if no chilling blasts were soon to nip their happy faces. He would never know the life-long dream of the student closeted in the little study there — a dream, alas! which like the blossoms without, trembling in each autumnal gust, is slowly withering with the dying year. William June — tutor, as the sign-board calls him — historian, as he is far too modest to call himself — has had a blow. The Board of Education has rejected the fondest project of his youth, the loving labor, at odd moments, of fifteen long and tedious years — a history of our thriving city.

The city-editor raised his eyes, permitting them to wander cautiously in the direction

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from which this tale had come—but the cub-reporter had withdrawn, noiselessly.

Professor June was seen this morning by a reporter for the *Herald*.

“Come in,” he said, smiling cordially. “This,” he added, an expression of indulgent fondness lighting up his kind brown eyes, “is my daughter, Katrina.”

The little miss held out a slender blue-veined hand.

“I used to be afraid of newspaper-men,” she lisped archly, “but I’m not any more,” and gravely excusing herself, she passed like a ray of sunshine from the room. Need it be added that the father’s eyes followed her in fond paternal fancy beyond the door?

The professor turned then to his guest whom he seated in the easiest chair the room afforded. It was a student’s paradise, the den of a philosopher, the midnight refuge of a brainy man. Shelves groaned under heavy tomes, and books of every age and clime lay in scholastic confusion on the professor’s desk.

A man of engaging presence, is Professor June, but of a manner so retiring and of a voice so low that no one would suspect his avocation. Even his vocation might not be guessed, were it not for the sign upon his dwelling, for there is nothing pedantic, nothing

didactic about the man; a little tendency to absent-mindedness, perhaps, behind his gold-rimmed spectacles — an inclination, it may be, to let his thoughts stray from the matter in hand into the Elysian fields of the imagination — but nothing more.

Harned, the city-editor, began to skim hurriedly the score of pages that remained. Time pressed and his desk was buried in other manuscripts, but the final paragraph, breathing with the writer's soul, now held his eye:

Thus, in the seclusion of his cottage cell, surrounded by his books, dearest of his friends, writes the historian. He hears, perchance, between his lines, the voice of his child singing blithely in an adjoining chamber, that child the solace of his heart bereft, bearing not only her mother's name, but in her fair young face — or so it seems to him, as he gazes upon her in the evening shadows — the very light and lineaments of her mother's countenance. Does Professor June say this? No. Such things lie too deep for words; they are to be subtly felt, hidden beneath the gentle exterior of this man of letters — this man whom no reverses daunt, who looks life's

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mutability in the face and tells you smilingly — “I am an optimist.”

When Addison Wrenn returned from luncheon he paused a moment upon the threshold, where, unobserved himself, the crack of the door provided him with a preliminary and precautionary view of Harned's desk. The city-editor seemed undisturbed; was solemnly engrossed as usual in his heads and his blue-pencilings, and did not even raise his eyes as the youth entered, passing as quietly and unpretentiously as possible to his usual chair. Even there, though seen obscurely from the rear, Harned had every appearance of a cold, impassive, impervious kind of man.

“Mr. Wrenn!”

Addison leaped from his seat, and an instant later found himself standing, breathless, by Harned's desk.

“Wrenn, get out to 99 Fielding Avenue as soon as possible. Crazy man's killed himself by jumping into a soap vat. *Hike!*”

“W — what's his name, sir?”

“How the devil do I know? I say—Wrenn!”

K A T R I N A

“Yes, sir” — from the doorway.

“Telephone in!”

“All right, sir.”

“And *Wrenn!*”

“Yes, sir.”

“I only want the facts, you know.”

“All right, sir.”

It was after three when Wrenn returned. The soap-vat story was in print, first page, and word for word as he had telephoned it from a corner pharmacy, but the other, the corking story, was nowhere to be seen; that is, nowhere among the double-heads, which he scanned twice to be quite certain, his throat dry and his eyes on the verge of tears.

He found it later, low down, in a corner of the sporting page, beneath an advertisement of patent medicine:

Professor William June, the historian, of 43 Abercrombie Street, is much disappointed though not discouraged, by the fact that a Board of Education Committee has declined to recommend his new local history as a textbook for the schools. When seen this afternoon by a reporter for the *Herald*, Chairman Flagg explained: “Courses are already over-

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crowded, and besides, it was considered unwise for the Board to father a work, however worthy, dealing with delicate matters of a political and personal nature in the history of our town."

At five that night Billy Buck's place in Jay Street was a house of mourning.

"What'll June think of me? How can *I* look him in the face? What's a man to do? — with old Gradgrind Harned on the desk? What chance have *you* got? What chance have *I*? Hell! What chance has Literature?"

IV

A GENTLE ART

A CARRIER-BOY with the sound of marbles rolling in his ears, and two prize cornelians and a lucky glassy in his trouser's pocket, must be of an inventive turn of mind unless he would lose half the joy of living. Some such necessity disclosed the fact that the porch at 43 Abercrombie Street was but a smart fling from the picket fence; that, without ever opening the gate at all, a *Herald*, doubled and wadded to fit the palm, could be hurled to the very door itself, to be found at leisure and gathered in by that selfsame "slender, blue-veined hand" which had fired the imagination of Addison Wrenn. On the unhappy evening when Literature met with such a stinging blow, the paper had scarcely fluttered to the mat when the door was opened, by some one who must have been waiting at the knob. Thus it came to pass that Addison was not the only disappointed soul that night, though the mild amazement of Professor June and the

indignation of his little daughter, when they found what they were searching for, were not of that anguish hitherto expressed. What pangs their modesty might have suffered, had the cub-reporter's corking story actually appeared in type, is beyond the limits of this other tale, but as it was, the professor gazed blankly through his spectacles at Katrina's open displeasure and chagrin.

"Why, I think it's horrid," she declared, "to go to people's houses and ask them all sorts of private questions, and have them be nice to you, and then not print a word — not a single, solitary word they say! And after all the gingerbread I gave him!"

"Of course," she went on, "one doesn't *give* gingerbread just to be put into the paper, but if one *takes* it —"

She paused. What words could express the perfidy, the gross ingratitude of the cub-reporter?

"Three slices, too!"

"We must not be hasty," her father said, "though it does seem strange."

"Strange!" she repeated. "Why, father, it's positively rude!"

K A T R I N A

“Still,” he remarked, gazing absently at the *Herald*, which he held loosely in his hand, “there must be some reason, you know — some reason we can only guess at.” He paused. “Why, it’s on the sporting-page.”

Katrina leaned upon his shoulder.

“Yes!” she replied — a “yes” of such concentrated horror and disapproval that she need not have added, “Oh, I think it’s insulting, father — think of it! — to be put in the very same place with jockeys and prize-fighters!”

“They printed what Flagg had to say,” the professor added.

Katrina set her lips tightly, but could not refrain:

“Maybe Mrs. Flagg gave him *four* slices of gingerbread.”

Her father laid the *Herald* upon his desk.

“Ah, well,” he said, “the young man may not be to blame, my dear. He seemed a very earnest young fellow.”

“Well, I think any one can afford to be earnest,” the little girl replied with grave scorn, “when one has been given — when one

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has been treated hospitably by perfect strangers."

Her father made no reply. He was gazing thoughtfully into space.

"Mr. Larry would not have acted so," declared Katrina.

"Mr. Larry?" the professor asked. "Who is Mr. Larry?"

"Why, don't you remember? Don't you remember the newspaper-man who was so nice to me last spring, who brought me all the way home under his umbrella?"

Her father nodded, vaguely.

"Ah, yes. I think I do."

"He was too much of a gentleman to do such things," Katrina added.

"It seems inexplicable," the professor said, as much to himself as to the child, and without a trace of resentment in his low, deliberate tones, "that the *Herald* should have failed so utterly to grasp the public importance of the plan — its vital elements — its high purpose. If it had been the *Journal* —"

"How do you know that Mr. Flagg didn't tell them *not* to put it in?" Katrina asked.

The professor gazed upon her in astonishment.

K A T R I N A

“Oh, no,” he said. “Mr. Flagg wouldn’t do that.”

But Katrina’s imagination had been kindled.

“I shouldn’t be surprised a bit,” she asserted, “if the School Board had *paid* them to keep it out!”

“But why?” her father asked.

“Why, for fear that the people would find out what they had done, and rise up and *make* them take the history.”

The professor shook his head.

“People *do* do such things,” Katrina protested. “The papers say so themselves.”

“No,” said her father. “The Board of Education wouldn’t dare to do a thing like that; they are respected citizens, my child. Mr. Flagg is a prominent member of the Methodist Church.”

“But every once in a while,” Katrina persisted, “you read of prominent men who do such things.”

“You hear of it —yes,” her father answered, “but it isn’t often that charges so serious are ever proved. Besides, human nature, my little girl, is not so mercenary as some people think. Would *I* offer or accept a bribe? No.

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Well, then, what right have I to suppose that other men would do so? — other men with little daughters of their own?" He turned mildly to his writing.

"Well, anyway, father," Katrina said, rising, "it will be a long, long time before I'll give any more gingerbread to a newspaper-man — so there!"

The next afternoon Larry McRae, turning by chance into Abercrombie Street, lost in thought, suddenly became aware of a small figure at his side, and a clear voice —

"Oh, I *thought* you'd come!"

— and looking closely, in amazement, found himself face to face with Katrina June.

"Ah!" he said.

"I felt sure of it," she told him, her eyes shining and the sweetest of smiles upon her lips.

"You did?" he inquired. "And how was that?"

"Oh, I felt it in my bones," she replied. "I told father that you were too much of a gentleman to do such a thing."

Mr. Larry's eyebrows began to rise.

K A T R I N A

“Do what, my dear?”

“Why, when the other *Herald* man came, you know, and then never printed a single word, and after we — after father had been so kind to him, I said to father: ‘Well, Mr. Larry wouldn’t have acted so?’ And do you know, I kind of felt it in my bones that you might come, when you heard about it. And then, just now, when I came out of the grocery, and saw you, why —”

She smiled up happily into his face.

“— I ran. Father’s at home, too, and he’ll be so glad to see you.”

She turned, and Mr. Larry for the first time realized what gate they stood before.

“Perhaps,” he said, “I’d better call tomorrow.”

“Oh, no,” was her cheerful answer. “Come right in. He’ll be delighted.”

“But I wouldn’t disturb him for the world.”

“Oh, he isn’t busy,” she assured him earnestly. “He’s mending the leg of the sofa with a starch box.”

But Mr. Larry was not to be hurried.

“Just a minute, my dear,” he began, vaguely. “Your father —”

“Was dreadfully disappointed,” she confessed. “He wouldn’t admit it, but he was. I *didn’t* like the looks of the other man, but one can’t always judge by appearances, you know; and he seemed to want to be pleasant. We did everything to make him feel at home, and then to have him act so!”

It was such a little yard that already they had reached the steps, which Katrina mounted like a bird, and she was opening the door before Mr. Larry could interpose,

“But, my dear child, I —”

“Father! Father! Here’s Mr. Larry come from the *Herald* to interview you.”

Mr. Larry paused awkwardly on the threshold.

“Come in,” she said. “Don’t be afraid.”

The professor, his face flushed, his spectacles pushed upward upon his perspiring brow, a nail in his teeth, and a hammer in one hand and the starch box in the other, appeared instantly.

“Come in,” he said. “I —”

He removed the nail.

“I was just attempting a little carpentry.”

“So your daughter informed me. I hope it is successful?”

K A T R I N A

“Well, no,” Professor June replied, looking ruefully at the room beyond. “That is: not yet. Sofa-wood is exceedingly tenacious.”

“I believe it is, sir,” said Mr. Larry, as they passed on to the decrepit sofa, an old-fashioned affair now leaning heavily upon its side. “A leg is gone.”

“Quite gone,” the professor replied sadly. “I was attempting to nail this starch-box in its place. Empty starch boxes, Mr. —”

“Larry,” Katrina said softly.

‘Empty starch boxes, Mr. Larry, are most useful things about the house. I always keep one or two on hand. Possibly you may never have observed, sir, but placed on end, with a book or two underneath, a starch box may be made the exact height of a leg of furniture! And if the chair or sofa wears a covering, or skirt as it were, like ours, you see — and especially if it is a rear leg that is fractured, why —’”

“I see,” said Mr. Larry. “It is an excellent notion. I must suggest it to my landlady. But if the sofa-wood proves so obstinate, why nail the box on at all? Why not just set the edge of the sofa upon the box?”

“Ah no, no, no, no!” the professor replied.
“My dear sir —”

“You see,” Katrina interposed, “we’ve tried it that way, and it worked all right till the other day a lady named Mrs. Riggin —”

“The lady in question,” the professor explained, “weighs a matter of two hundred and twenty-two pounds, sir.”

“Sat down suddenly,” said Katrina.

Mr. Larry stared.

“Dear me!” he said. “And the starchbox?”

“Jiggled right over!” explained Katrina.

“And the lady?”

“Fortunately,” the professor replied, “no bones were broken.”

“But the shock,” said Katrina, “was rather more serious than we supposed — wasn’t it father?”

“You mean,” Mr. Larry suggested, “that Mrs. Riggin still entertains some slight feelings of —”

“Oh, yes — all over” Katrina hastened to reply.

“— resentment?” Mr. Larry concluded.

“Abrasion, *she* said,” the little girl answered.
“It’s Latin, I suppose.”

The professor, gazing at the broken sofa, observed reflectively,

“Mrs. Riggin, I think, was quite as pleasant as could be expected, under the circumstances. You can see where I tried to drive the nails.”

“Perfectly,” Mr. Larry replied, scanning the fracture. “Professor, try screws, sir.”

The professor’s face kindled instantly.

“I will!” he cried. “Singular that I never thought of screws. Won’t you sit down, Mr. Larry? Katrina, clear a chair for the gentleman. No, sir,” he added as he seated himself at his cluttered desk, “I tried clothes-line, and I tried picture-wire, and I tried nails, sir, but I’m blest if I ever once thought of screws!”

Mr. Larry looked curiously at the professor. He was a little slender man of middle age, with a very noble head, scholarly in its height of brow and the sparse gray locks about it, but not less striking in the child-like mildness of the eyes, which like the mouth beneath were of a very large and gravely smiling tenderness.

“You wished to see me, Mr. Larry. What can I do for you?”

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It was evidently a solemn moment for Mr. Larry, who glanced first at Katrina, appealingly, and then doubtfully at the professor.

"Perhaps I'd better go," said the little girl, rising.

"Oh, no! No, indeed!" cried Mr. Larry, with such marked earnestness that she sat down again.

"I am very sorry," he began, clearing his throat — "that is, the *Herald* is very sorry, I am sure, to have caused you any uneasiness, Professor June."

"Oh, not uneasiness," the latter protested. "Some little disappointment, perhaps, but not uneasiness, sir."

"Disappointment, I meant to say," was the reply. "Not uneasiness, of course. You were warranted, I think, in disappointment."

"It was nothing after all," the professor said. "We won't mention it."

Mr. Larry's face brightened suddenly.

"Have you a copy of last night's *Herald* handy? I — I didn't bring one."

"Well, no," the professor answered. "I am very sorry, but the paper with the item in it was used for kindling, by mistake."

K A T R I N A

"It didn't say very much, you know," remarked Katrina.

"Oh, no, of course not," Mr. Larry hastened to reply. "I only thought we might — might refresh our minds a little, you know; but it isn't necessary."

"And they put it on the sporting-page, too!" said the little girl.

"Did they?" Mr. Larry answered. "Ah, so they did."

He paused thoughtfully.

"Did this — this other man," he inquired, "seem to — seem to grasp your — attitude, professor?"

"Perfectly," Professor June replied.

"Oh, he was most enthusiastic," Katrina added, "wasn't he, father?"

"He appeared pleased," was the modest corroboration.

"Strange," murmured Mr. Larry, gazing at the rug. "I don't wonder that you were astonished. Still, we must remember, that when a reporter falls down on his assignment—"

"Falls down!" cried the professor. "You don't mean to tell me that this young man hurt himself!"

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Mr. Larry stared.

"Oh, no," he said. "I spoke professionally, that was all. We use that expression when a newspaper-man fails to get what he is sent for."

"But we gave him everything!" the professor replied.

"I should think we did!" interposed Katrina. "We gave him everything about the house."

Mr. Larry pricked up his ears.

"Well, now, professor," he remarked engagingly, hitching up his chair, and slipping a roll of copy-paper from his coat. "Suppose you give *me*, now — everything — about the house."

The professor stared; then his face broke into smiles of recognition.

"Very good!" he said. "Good joke, Mr. Larry! I see the young man was frank, at least, just as I thought. Well, now, Katrina?"

He beamed suggestively.

"I think we might, don't you? That is, if there's any left, my dear?"

Katrina rose.

"I'll go and see," she said sweetly; "but

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I'm not quite sure; and it won't be so fresh as it was yesterday."

Mr. Larry's face —

"Why," he said, "I—I hope I'm not too late, and of course you are not to go to any trouble in the matter. I simply want what you gave the other man."

Katrina glanced at the professor, and the professor at Katrina, and Mr. Larry gazed from one to the other in great astonishment.

"I see there is some misunderstanding," he said earnestly. "Pray be seated, Katrina." His tone was so commanding that the little girl sank into a chair without a word.

"And now, professor," he continued with business-like directions, "let me inquire, first, where *is* the house?"

"House?" repeated the professor, blankly.

"Why, yes — house, I think you said."

"Oh!" cried Katrina. "I know, father. He wants to know what our number is! Of course."

A great relief dawned in the professor's countenance.

"O — oh!" he said. "Forty-three Abercrombie Street."

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Katrina thought Mr. Larry snickered till she looked more sharply; there was no expression in that wooden face.

"For-ty-three Aber-crombie Street," he repeated gravely, jotting it down. "And now, professor," he said cheerfully, returning the copy-paper to his pocket and leaning back comfortably in his chair, "suppose you tell me — what you told the other man."

The professor's face flushed.

"Well," he said, "where shall I begin?"

"I'll leave that entirely to you," Mr. Larry replied, gazing thoughtfully out of the study window. "Every man knows his own affairs best."

He turned smilingly.

"You are certainly better acquainted with this matter than I am."

His expression was a droll mixture of good-humor and emphatic earnestness.

"It's really very interesting," Katrina remarked. "At least *I* think so."

"I'm sure it is," Mr. Larry replied, and I would suggest that what your father leaves out, you might supply — to better fix the matter in my mind, you know."

KATRINA

He was still smiling, as he turned again to the professor.

"How long," he asked, "have you had this — thing — upon your mind?"

"Years," was the answer. "You understand, of course, that it is not so much that my long labor has been rejected, as that its purpose — an old, old hobby of mine — should be deemed so trivial."

"I can quite understand your feelings on that score, professor," Mr. Larry heartily assured him.

"And, moreover," Professor June went on, "that I should be denied a further hearing by the Board.

"Ah, yes — the Board!" cried Mr. Larry, nodding his head significantly. "That's the rub."

"And by the *full* Board," declared the professor, with growing emphasis.

"By all means," Mr. Larry agreed. "Not by half the Board, or a quarter of the Board, or by a Board committee — not by a jug-full — but by the full Board in session assembled."

"Exactly," Professor June replied.

A GENTLE ART

“Now, your idea,” Mr. Larry went on, rousing himself to an upright posture and fixing the professor with his eyes; “that is, of course, your *fundamental* idea, if I understand it, is —”

He paused expectantly.

“My hope,” Professor June replied, his face growing in animation, “has been to foster among our future citizens civic traditions and civic pride, believing, Mr. Larry, that if our schoolboys —”

“Yes, and our schoolgirls too,” Mr. Larry interposed with great earnestness.

“True,” the professor agreed. “Believing, I say, that if our school children were instructed not only in the history of their nation, but in that of their native *town* as well — how it was founded in this western wilderness, how it sprang up and grew among the farms, and how the battles for its order, its beauty, and its prosperity were fought and won by citizens dead and gone —”

“And well-nigh forgotten,” said Mr. Larry.

“Exactly,” said Professor June. “Believing, I say, that such a study, Mr. Larry, would result in a more intelligent, a more conscien-

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tious and loyal citizenship, and that a wiser and more efficient local government would most assuredly ensue."

"Professor," Mr. Larry replied warmly, "the thing dawns on me; it appeals to me; I see now that I never really comprehended the matter before. And you propose to do this, if I grasp your purpose, sir, by —"

He paused as expectantly as before.

"Yes," Professor June replied. "I *proposed* to do it in the manner already familiar to you."

"Ah, yes," Mr. Larry quickly answered, "but let us go into *details*, professor — as if I knew nothing — *nothing*, you understand; as if I had come here to interview you entirely ignorant of what you had done, of your plan, of its high purpose. Let us have no cloudy conceptions, my dear professor. This is an important public matter. You propose, then, to accomplish this by means of —"

He waited patiently.

"Why," Professor June responded, "by means of my history, as you know; my history of the town prepared solely as a text-book for the public schools."

“Good!” said Mr. Larry, smiling and nodding vigorously. “Such was my understanding of your plan, professor, but I desired a definite expression of it from your own lips, sir — as a matter of form.”

He seemed elated, and rising suddenly began to pace the floor, to and fro, between the desk and the chair where Katrina sat, lost in wonder.

“If I have caught your idea, professor,” he now continued, “you hold that it might be wiser to teach our schoolboys a little less about *ancient* monuments and a little more about those marble forms of departed citizens which they see and wonder at among the green leaves of our parks.”

“Exactly!” said Professor June.

“In which event,” Mr. Larry proceeded to remark, “our local epitaphs, as it were, whether on memorial tombs and monuments, or in the names of our public places, would be more eloquent to the public eye!”

“My idea exactly!” said Professor June.

“In other words,” said Mr. Larry, gazing far out into the street, “who *was* old Abercrombie? And what right had he to all these

memorial tablets on our civic lamp-posts, our corner dwellings, and our corner trees? And what of Bates of Bates Street, and Barker of Barker, and Ledyard of Ledyard, and the mythical Yerrington who has a whole green square, fountain and all, to his renown? And why is the library called the Peterborough? And who had the forethought, and the enterprise, and the money, maybe, to project those gardens by the river side whose flowery loneliness we accept so thoughtlessly in our leisure hours? And the pond where our little boys sail their boats? And the Zoo, which has added materially to the welfare of a worthy and heretofore neglected section of our citizens — the peanut-men?"

The professor was well-nigh speechless with delight.

"That's it!" he cried, laughing heartily, with the tears stealing from his eyes. "That's it; that's my idea, sir; you've hit it; I couldn't have said it better myself. Eh, Katrina?"

"Oh, I think it's lovely!" cried the little girl. "Mr. Larry, I don't see how you could think it all out so quick!"

"Not much like the other fellow," the pro-

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fessor asserted, gazing admiringly at Mr. Larry.

"No — o! Not at all," Katrina replied. "Why, the other reporter made father do *all* the talking!"

Mr. Larry only laughed softly.

"I tell you," the professor declared with warmth, "interviewing is an art, Mr. Larry! It's an art, sir."

"Possibly," was the modest answer. "A very gentle, gentle art, professor."

"It is wonderful! — wonderful," was the other's comment, "how you have caught the spirit of my plan!"

"Have you a copy of your history?" Mr. Larry asked.

The professor took from a shelf a small red volume, published, as he confessed, with his own savings. Opening to the title-page, Mr. Larry read it, half aloud, till he reached the names:

BY WILLIAM AND KATRINA JUNE.

"My wife," the professor explained in a lower voice, "was a great help to me."

K A T R I N A

Mr. Larry closed the book and took the professor warmly by the hand.

"I must be going," he said. "I will do what I can."

But as he turned away, Katrina, who had slipped out unobserved, entered smilingly with a plate of gingerbread in her hands.

V

UNDER THE ROSE

EVERY year Mr. Larry solemnly resolved to buy his Christmas gifts in ample season, and every year bought them as usual on Christmas eve. He would be taken suddenly in the afternoon with a kind of chill for which wonted restoratives were unavailing, and was then to be seen, muffled in thought, his face drawn with an expression of pained anxiety, and his jaws set, while he wandered from window to window and counter to counter in his yearly quest. He had not realized It was so near, was his explanation; he must get something for Fanny's boy — and for Minerva, the landlady's daughter — and for John's Elsie.

“How big is the child?” literal clerks had a way of asking.

“I don't know; I haven't seen her in years.”

“Then she must be grown up.”

She might be grown up; and she might not. Mr. Larry really could not say. But John's

Elsie lived nine hundred miles to the eastward, and to-morrow was Christmas, and trusting to Heaven and a night-express, he must get something into the mail. Well it was for him on such occasions that there was always a handkerchief counter for John's Elsie, and a necktie counter for Fanny's boy. Little girls, grown-up or not, all have noses, he reflected, and neckties are always handy, even in drawers, or hung on gas jets against emergencies that never arise. The book shelf too was a safe harbor in the eleventh hour; poems are always in good taste—whether read or not, Mr. Larry observed in his "Cap and Bells."

Striving valiantly with the shopping throngs it was a consolation that other people too seemed to have forgotten; and after dinner when the city was aglow, and the streets and toy shops were crammed with parents and the children who on other nights are put to bed, Mr. Larry — handkerchiefs, necktie and poems sent — liked to roam aimlessly, gazing and wondering with the rest. It was his joy to stand, waist deep in other people's children, beaming upon the mechanical toys that whirred

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and squeaked for them, climbed, hobbled, ran, careening perilously near the counter's edge to raise their shrieks, and turning in the nick of time with sly humor in their painted faces; and when they stopped, Mr. Larry noted with delight the cheerful patience, the mute and dry-eyed resignation with which they waited, bottom-side up, perhaps, to be wound up again.

There was one in particular this Christmas eve: an amiable rabbit, which bounded marvellously upon occasion, but was most admired for a certain very bunny-like tremulousness about the nose and whiskers. It had, moreover, as pink an eye as any live rabbit of its age and weight in twenty hutches, and was altogether the cunningest beastie in the show. Mr. Larry watched its antics with increasing glee, till wandering off in sheer desperation and fulness of soul, he would seize the first youngster he could lay his hands on.

"Hi there! Boy! Have you seen the rabbit?"

"No."

"You come with me."

Distracted parents now and then interfered,

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looking askance at the tall abductor, and collaring their sons.

“Here! where are you going?”

“To see the rabbit.”

“What rabbit?”

“Why *he* says there’s a rabbit.”

“Well, you stay here.”

“But my dear parent,” Mr. Larry would interpose earnestly, “have *you* seen the rabbit?”

“No.”

“Then come with me.”

A score of parents thus saw what they might have missed, and at least four several kidnapped youngsters were surprised next day; but the charming feature of this rabbit business, to Mr. Larry, the more he thought of it, was the exceedingly natural-historical manner in which new bunnies, pink-eyed and amiable and sensitive of nose as ever, appeared from the hutch behind the counter as fast as the old ones were wrapped away.

“At which, at first, I marveled,” Mr. Larry casually observed to the Nearest Parent, “till I chanced to remember the rabbit’s predisposition, activity and proclivity for the singular phenomena of which I speak.”

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The Nearest Parent eyed Mr. Larry in some perplexity, but ventured to remark:

“Out West I’ve seen more darned rabbits than you could shake a stick at.”

“Exactly!” cried Mr. Larry, warmly, “Just what I say,” adding, as he gazed upon the Nearest Parent with something akin to admiration in his face: “Permit me to remark, sir, that you have a most trenchant way of putting things.”

“You — you like rabbits?” the Nearest Parent was moved to suggest.

“Very much, sir.”

“You have children of your own perhaps?” remarked the father.

“It scarcely follows,” Mr. Larry pleasantly replied. “While your inference is perhaps but natural under the circumstances, it proves, sir, that you have never partaken of a succulent rabbit-pie. You have my condolence.”

But the Nearest Parent made no intelligible response and moved off with his wife and family as swiftly as the crowded aisles permitted, leaving Mr. Larry to pursue the subject at his ease and pleasure, which he did, and satisfactorily enough, judging by the

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smile that illuminated his musings for some time afterward. Nor was he more successful with the mother of two charming little girls, who, upon his kindly offering to wind up the patent jig-a-ma-rig for their amusement, clucked indignantly to her offspring, and, gathering them in her skirts, swept safely away.

Even the clerks began to note him in a watchful manner, and a tall, grenadierish individual, argus-eyed, appeared surprisingly at every corner Mr. Larry turned.

"I beg your pardon," Mr. Larry said, stepping considerately aside as they met by the wooden-ware.

Argus made no reply.

"Beg pardon," said Mr. Larry, as courteously as ever, when they met again by the cut-glass water-bottles, but the man was silent as before.

"The fool's deaf," said Mr. Larry, turning abruptly; but at the roller skates he again encountered those watchful eyes.

"You seem disturbed," Mr. Larry remarked with deep solicitude. "Is there anything I can do for you? Do you ever try bromo-seltzer?"

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But Argus frowned and moved majestically away, till in rounding the lace goods Mr. Larry ran full tilt upon the man.

“Say,” he cried, “you and I appear to be hunting for the same fellow.”

“I shouldn’t be surprised if we were,” was the sharp reply.

Mr. Larry turned and watched the man curiously as he passed on, head and shoulders above the throng. Happily they did not meet again. A strange unrest and gloom had fallen on Mr. Larry. The pleasure of wandering among the Christmas counters had taken wings. The very children, even the pink-eyed jumping rabbit, now failed to charm. Wherever he strayed, wherever he stopped, he felt eyes looking. They pierced his back, so that he turned guiltily. His very hands became a burden: free, they would arouse suspicion; in his own pockets they might cause alarm. What right, apparently, had a purchase-less bachelor like himself to be prowling in the haunts of honest domesticated men with children to buy things for?

He went into the street, but even there he felt how purposeless he was in that Christmas

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multitude. Children were raising their eager, half-scared faces to a dozen sham Santas in masks and packs, bowing and mumbling on the curb-stones and making a pretense of jotting down fervent prayers. Families, four abreast, not counting bundles, bumped their way cheerfully from store to store. Laughing together, linked tightly arm in arm, they swept lone single men into gutters without a glance of pity or a word of shame.

Mr. Larry took refuge in Billy Doe's, where bachelors are made at home and minors are not permitted. There was a hearty glow within, and a comforting noise of revelry by the bar, where he soon encountered another fugitive, a man named Strout, a red-eyed refugee imbibing a Tom and Jerry and discoursing on the joys of Christmas.

"It is the best time of all the year," he said. "Yes, sir, there's no time like it. It does a man good. It opens his bosom. It warms the cockles of his heart — eh?"

Mr. Larry nodded.

"Why, say," cried Strout, "my bar-bill at Christmas amounts sometimes to as high as —"

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The sum, doubtless, was prodigious, but it was lost in the laughter of a party opposite, so that Mr. Larry could only look such astonishment as seemed befitting to a mighty tale.

"Yes, sir," said Strout, "Christmas is a high old time, *I* tell you; and it's a mighty good thing that it only comes once a year."

Mr. Larry nodded, smilingly as before. It was already Christmas when he reached the boarding-house. Christmas was a high old time, as Strout had said, but to Mr. Larry there was no illusion any longer in high old times; he had known too many, and this one had left him yawning, less in fatigue of body than in heaviness of soul. He was a cup too low, Strout would have told him, but the clear pure wintry air through which he had come, alone and musing, made other draughts seem murky cheer, while the moonlit snow, traced with the shadows of the naked boughs above him, woke wistful memories of bob-sleds and country coasting, Christmas eves ago.

Opening Mrs. Wither's door with his latchkey, he went up slowly to his room and removed his coat. The moon made other light

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unnecessary, till an odd-looking package lying on the bureau caught his eye, and the mild radiance from his frosty window proved insufficient for a fine inscription on the card attached. He lighted the gas.

“For Mr. Larry, from Katrina June—and not to be opened till he removes his shoes before his fire.”

He read it twice.

“Before my fire,” he repeated, smiling at the register, through which some faint suggestion of distant coziness rose to his outstretched hands. Laughing to himself he laid his fingers upon the holly-red ribbon that bound his gift — but paused.

“Why not?” he asked himself. “It would please the child.”

First looking cautiously about to see that the door was shut, though the house was silent as the grave, he drew off one heavy shoe and then the other, and placing his feet upon the tepid scroll-work of the register, severed the bow-knot with his pocket knife and tore from the paper a pair of crimson embroidered slippers, gorgeous gear, which he held up critically, chuckling and muttering to himself — “Well,

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well, well, well now: Not so bad. Pretty radiant, but not so bad, Katrina"—and slipping them on then, with tentative wriggling of his toes, he leaned back thoughtfully in his chair. For some little time he sat there quietly with a pleased expression on his face.

"They're not so red when you get them on," he muttered, and looking up, added slowly, "there's whisky from Dudley, and whisky from Hooker, and whisky from Bill." Then he dropped his eyes again: "And now here's — hm — good little thing!"

Rising suddenly to his roseate feet he began to hum, something tuneless enough to be his own composing, and which ended in a throaty flourish of his fuller voice —

Ry-de-ry-de-rink-dum-duddy

— his face screwed up into that expression of internal agony with which most mortals burst into song. At the same instant he half-filled a glass from one of the three tall Christmas bottles on the shelves, and pouring in water to the brim, raised the liquor to the level of his eyes, drank at a gulp, and finished with a sigh. Then he lighted a cigarette; then he drew on

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his overcoat again, turning the collar about his ears, for the room was colder with advancing night, and seating himself at his cluttered table, pushed back its papers and dipped his pen:

MY DEAR KATRINA:—Sitting this evening before my cheerful fire, with your beautiful slippers on — embroidered, I take it, by your own fair hands — I fell to dreaming, as all old bachelors are supposed to do, and ought, I am sure, if only in deference to those lovely stories they write about us. I do not mean that I fell asleep, but into that reverie commonly believed to be our natural state. Any man clothed in such magic raiment is bound to do so, I suppose, though it is not my custom, even in slippers, to forget the world, having, I fear, too much in common with its hard realities and not enough with its rosy mists. That I broke the habits of a lifetime is due, my child, to your deft fingers and your gentle courtesy in remembering a lone man's Christmas day. Three others remembered it, but alas! my dear, in *most worldly spirits!* — you only with true heavenly grace.

You must know first how my good dog Ponto slept on the hearth-rug at my feet, while the Lady Angora purred her national anthem in my softest chair — so I chose another to wear my slippers and dream my dream. You must know also how my books — books

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piled to the very ceiling, shelf on shelf, and my fine engravings of scenes from Shakespeare and Walter Scott, all seemed to doze with me. My rugs in the firelight stretched warm about me like Persian gardens in the sun, all rose and golden and olive-green. You know the ballad —

“I’ll sing three songs of Araby
And tales of fair Cashmere —
Wild tales to cheat thee of a sigh
Or charm thee to a tear.”

Well, I do not claim such magic for my own poor voice, nor do I play the dulcimer (which stands, by the way, in the corner farthest from my fire — heat cracks them so) yet I think it would surprise you, that dream of mine, which was heightend, doubtless, by the fire-light flush reddening as it passed our slippers, and leaping thence to the mahogany table (which was my grandma’s, and which stands now in the very center of my room) turning its surface to the bosom of a lake at sunset. It was most astonishing. It reminded me of Perkins’s Pond up in New Hampshire when I stayed in late with Spider Ryder and the Thomas boys and Fatty Brown. Me and the Thomases went head-foremost, first clip off, but Fatty, he always had to be kind of — *shoved*.

And that reminds me how the light leaped higher till it touched the rafters — my room is a beamed one,

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you may not know, of weathered oak to match the wainscot, in which, by the by, I had them build me a secret door, a sliding panel cunningly devised, in case I — really, I beg your pardon, but one *might*, you know; for, under the rose — and mark you, I mention this only to you, dear child, of all the world (knowing your prudence) *the smugglers, my love, are not all dead.*

Ah, no! You ask Fat Brown if you don't believe me. Ask him what Neddy Thomas and Sliver McRae planned out at Perkins's *that afternoon* — he'll know which one. But don't you tell! ! ! My sugar, if you do, you know — well, it's lucky for me that I've got the panel; that's all, my dear.

But if They catch me in spite of that . . . you'll find my will in the thirteenth drawer of my old iron Portuguese chest, which stands in the south-east corner of my great clothes closet. The combination is

X Q 1 Z 4 — Buns

three times and you've got it, but Gee! *look out!* — for the lid pops open and fires off a pistol that was Captain Kidd's. Fat and Me found it by Perkins's Pond. It's only blank cartridge, so don't be frightened, but Glory and Snakes! it kicks up (the devil of) a racket, Katrina, my dear.

Let's be more cheerful. I hate this matter of the will, though it must be mentioned, now that you know what goes before; and when all's said, I'm not a coward (neither was Kidd), and my only regret concern-

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ing my own particular, peculiar — my *taking off*, my dear, is the fact that I shan't be around when Captain Kidd's pistol — when some fool opens that Portuguese chest.

[Pardon me here: I was called just then to fill a cup for the Dink o' Wa-wa Girl, who sleeps in an adjoining chamber. She is a good little child, but is never quite ready to go to bed, and when she is put there against her will, lies awake humming and thinking up Things — questions mostly: what makes there be elephants? and why ain't fairies? and why don't you kiss her then? And if you have, six times already, and tell her so, she makes that last faint, pitiful request which one were a brute to deny the rogue — though her thirst be feigned.]

It is for you, Katrina, to guess my dream. Mystery it is; a riddle to muddle your dear young mind, and hidden in the very things I've told you here, like the picture-card puzzles we used to have — to find the man's face, and the swan, and the camel, and Heaven knows what, and all perhaps in an old oak tree with lambs beneath. You turned the picture, you remember, till you found them in twisted branches and clustered leaves. You must turn my picture, upside and downside, to find my dream.

You must find it *yourself*. Oh, you mustn't *show* this! — for here in the middle is the part about — you know. It's not for others, who would soon be blab-

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bing, and I should be popping through the secret door and *where it leads to.* (Some day you'll know.)

I had always wished for a little girl to share my secret, dreadful and shameful though it is, and something to be whispered. Then the slippers came and I knew — by the color — that I had found her. She will not mind, then, if I send my love, as a kind of red ribbon to tie up my thanks with. Remember me kindly to her father, but oh! beware lest he even dream of what I have told her, for he knows me only as

MR. LARRY.

P.S. *Flames tell no tales!*

VI

PARTICEPS CRIMINIS

THE little embroidering Katrina had expected a letter at the very least; down in her heart of hearts she had even hoped that Mr. Larry might come himself to Abercrombie Street, to take her hand, and perhaps to — perhaps to raise it with as grave a gallantry as he had used before. She had even prepared herself against that scene:

“Oh, Mr. Larry, what are *slippers* compared with your kindness to father’s book!”

Or, better still, if she could only remember it, when the crisis came with its natural confusion:

“Oh, Mr. Larry, you are far too generous to one who can never, *never* thank you enough for all your kindness to her dear father.”

From which it appears that Katrina knew how they did such things in books — those shelf-worn books that her mother had loved to linger over, as just such another little slipper-embroidering girl.

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Dear child! Did she imagine that editors are to be caught so easily with bits of trumpery needle-work bouquets? That a man of the world would surrender to a pair of bright red slippers tied up with holly-berry ribbon? She had snared his feet with her silken threads. What more? Would she have his heart as well?

But what, after all, is a mere disappointment, pure and simple, compared to the knowledge that the man you have just made slippers and learned kind speeches for, knows another little girl? — younger, it is true, a mere child, but a girl no less, for whose *feigned* thirstiness he would break your letter squarely in two? And not only a fibber, but a naughty, disobedient child as well, who should go to bed willingly when her parents said so, and not be annoying the other boarders in adjoining rooms. And where were her parents all that time? Gadding probably; off to the theater, no doubt, leaving their darling to the mercy of whoever happened to be around, like poor Mr. Larry, who was kindness itself, but needed his rest when his work was done. Suppose Mr. Larry had not been at home? What

then? The poor little thing might have died of thirst!

As to the Other Matter, it could not be true. He was only fooling. Mr. Larry, a smuggler! Mr. Larry, who had been so kind that day in the rain? — and so thoughtful at the gate? Mr. Larry, who had written that beautiful article in the *Evening Herald*, a column long, on her father's history? Mr. Larry, a smuggler!

He *said* so, plainly enough, as Katrina made out as often as she perused his letter; and she read it over and over, many times daily, in that perfect secrecy which he enjoined, not daring to mention the bare possession of it to her father lest he ask hard questions and learn the contents, which might, after all, prove true, you know. It was foolish to think so, she admitted, but when one is asked particularly, begged, even warned! — what can one do?

Of course the smuggling was Mr. Larry's dream. She had said that from the very first. Turning his letter in her mind, upside and downside, as he had said, there seemed no question of what was vision and what reality. What, she had asked herself, was the storiest

sounding thing in all the letter? Why, this smuggley-business, to be sure, with its secret panel and its Portuguese chest. The rest was beautiful, and just what a bachelor's letter to a child *should* be, but there was nothing strange, nothing wild about it: firelight and bachelors go together, every one knows.

Yet it seemed odd too that the smuggling was the only matter, the only portion of his long message, that he warned her repeatedly not to tell. She was not to breathe it to her father, even. Why should a man fear to tell a dream?

True, he had dared her to ask Fat Brown. Who *was* Fat Brown?

It occurred to Katrina that if Mr. Larry were really what he said he was — supposing, of course, such a thing were possible — it would explain what she had never been able to understand: why, for example, he had always declined their invitations to come and see them, and spend an evening in Abercrombie Street, A smuggler, no doubt, would be busy evenings. That too would explain why he never asked them to his lovely, lovely, oak-beamed chamber, when he knew she loved cats.

There was a Mrs. Brown on Cedar Street, and a Teenie Brown and a Johnny Brown, and there *had* been a Mr. Brown, not fat at all, but he was dead. How should she ask Fat Brown when she didn't know him? and even if she had known him, would she have dared?

The whole thing was, of course, absurd. Would a real, live smuggler confess to a girl? — who might tell her father? — who might tell the police? Not that *she*, Katrina, was the tattle-tale kind; Mr. Larry knew that; he had said so himself — “knowing your prudence,” had been his words. And men *do* confess crimes; *must* tell some one, she had heard it said; why, what was that story her father told her? — of the man with the long, long furry ears, whose barber, quaking lest the dreadful secret escape his lips, whispered it into a hole he had dug, and filled the hole up again.

Who *was* Fat Brown?

If the part about smuggling wasn't the dream, what was the dream? Was it the Pistol? If it *was* the Pistol, got up to scare her, why then — what then?

She had read somewhere that a child's in-

tuition is sometimes shrewder than a grown person's wits. Her father, she remembered, had explained it to her — and she had had intuitions ever since that day. She had had one, as she now recollects, that day in the rain. It had struck her suddenly, the moment she heard Mr. Larry say "newspaper-man," and it was so powerful that she took her arm away! Could it be possible as she first had thought? Were they wolves in sheep's clothing, these newspaper-men? — smugglers by night, editors by day?

"Father," she asked, "*who is* Fat Brown?"

"What's that, my dear?"

"Who is Fat Brown?"

The professor frowned.

"Fat Brown?"

"Yes, Fat Brown. He's a friend, I believe of Mr. Larry's."

Her father pondered.

"I never heard of him. Fat, I should say, is merely a nickname, due, I presume, to the gentleman's adiposity."

"I suppose that's it," Katrina answered, and said no more. That night she looked backward on the stairs.

“By the way, McRae,” the professor inquired, a day or two afterward, meeting his friend upon the street, “who *is* Fat Brown? Katrina seemed curious about him. She rather imagined you knew the man.”

“We were boys together,” Mr. Larry replied. “Were I a smuggler —”

He paused grimly and fixed the professor with his eye.

“Were I a smuggler, I would trust Fat Brown with the key of my Portuguese chest.”

“My dear,” the professor said, that night at dinner. “McRae said a singular thing today. I asked him about Fat Brown.”

“Father! what did he say?”

“Why, he said,” the professor replied with deliberation, between his mouthfuls, “that if he were a — if he were a smuggler — he would trust Fat Brown — with the key of his —”

Katrina whispered it.

“*Portuguese chest!*”

The professor stared.

“Why, how did you know he said that?”

Katrina, first white, then red, stammered:

“I g-guessed it, father.”

“You did!”

“I mean I — I mean it was an Intuition, father.”

Wonder and pride contended in the professor’s eyes.

“Do you know,” he said, when he managed to find his voice again, “your mother was always guessing things before I told her. It’s a gift, I think. You’re uncommonly like her, Katrina, my dear.”

Katrina blushed and hung down her head — for shame.

Crime now was a reality it had never been to her. With her own guilt burning upon her cheeks, and lying like lead upon her childish soul, Mr. Larry’s knavery seemed far more likely than she had thought, and for aught she knew, all evil-doing might be as easy and as unforeseen as her words had been. Her father’s code was founded upon a maxim she had heard him utter a hundred times: “To all crimes, great and small, the first step is a little white lie. Beware, my child!” Mr. Larry’s secret was never nearer to a sad disclosure than it was that night when the little white liar kneeled down in prayer.

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“Were I a smuggler, I would trust Fat Brown with the key of my Portuguese chest.”

Mr. Larry's words burned in Katrina's mind, igniting many an Intuition there. The bare thought of him popping through the sliding panel into “*where it leads to,*” and the knowledge that even so safe a refuge might not conceal him from the law's long, blue-sleeved arm, had held her bound to him, though her silence seemed even more wicked now than his vague and even doubtful sin. She tried to assure herself that the thing was nonsense, but there *were* smugglers, she ascertained, for the papers said so, and why were there Customs, if not to catch them? What did he smuggle? she asked herself. What *do* smugglers smuggle? She was not quite sure, but she had a notion — which is a thing just next to an Intuition — that it was Rum. She had observed that the moment she thought “Smugglers,” she thought “Rum” — rum in kegs, kegs lifted down from a boat in the *offing*, which sounded as dreadful and was quite as mysterious to her fair young mind as the sliding panel or the Portuguese chest. And all this, she knew, would happen on a

moonless night. (She had found, it seems, in a Sunday school library, *The Life and Letters of Captain Kidd.*) Fancy lifting down kegs from a boat in the offing — on a pitch-dark night!

Katrina fancied it, and was struck breathlessly — intuitively, in fact — by what no good little girl should dream of harboring for an instant: an Admiration that Mr. Larry might be, in truth, so brave a man! But Katrina, remember, had taken that first, that downward step. She was in a fair way now of beginning to wish that Mr. Larry *might* — ah, well! She was brooding too much on those desolate, midnight, rum-strewn sands, poor child!

Once she remembered that there was no such coast for miles about her — but there might be an offing around somewhere.

“Father,” she ventured, “exactly what is an offing?”

“Well, it’s a sea-term,” he explained. “It means off-shore; that is, in the distance.”

“I see: in the distance,” she replied, thoughtfully. “That’s why it’s so convenient, I suppose.”

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"Convenient, my dear? One scarcely speaks of distance as being convenient."

"For smugglers — and pirates," she explained.

"Ah! In that case — yes."

"Are smugglers," she inquired, after a moment's deliberation, "often caught, father?"

"Always," he replied, so promptly that Katrina jumped.

"Whether people tell on them, or not?" she asked.

"Well," said the professor, "I suppose there is usually some person around honest and respectable enough to tell the officers."

Katrina turned red. It was some little time before she asked in a hesitating voice and with many a swallow between her words:

"But, father — suppose now — you knew a *good* smuggler: would you tell on him?"

"There is no such thing as a *good* smuggler," the professor answered; "that is, if you mean a noble one, my child. They are all dishonest ruffians and deserve to be hanged."

It was one of those things he liked to say sometimes, to see her stare. She knew quite well that he stepped over ant-hills, but this

thought of Mr. Larry — dangling! — proved too much, and she shuddered and turned pale.

“Yes, sir,” the professor repeated, trying very much to look like an ogre, but beaming instead, with the thought of how blood-curdling his words must seem: “All smugglers deserve to be hanged, my love. Except first-cabin ones,” he added slyly, chuckling to himself, for his jest was lost on Katrina’s ears. She was deep in thought, from which she roused herself to ask him earnestly:

“Mightn’t a man be tempted into smuggling, father? — and fall? Wouldn’t you give him a chance to repent? Suppose — suppose he were a Presbyterian, father? — or a Mason?”

The professor laughed. This mood of gaiety was very rare with him and at another time she would have welcomed it.

“Don’t laugh,” she begged. “This is *very* important, father.”

“Well,” he replied, “the case, as you put it, is rather difficult, I admit. If you had said Unitarian, I might imagine it, but a — a Presbyterian smuggler, Katrina! My child you cannot realize what you have said.”

“But suppose it, father.”

“In the case of a young Presbyterian,” he began —”

“How young?” she inquired.

“Say under fifty.”

“Yes,” she said.

“I think I’d plead with him,” the professor answered; “I think I’d warn him — and labor with him — before I’d hand him to the law.”

The child seemed satisfied. Her face was brighter than before.

“But what,” asked her father, “put smuggling into your head?”

She dropped her eyes.

“Mr. Larry’s nonsense?” he inquired, “about Fat Brown?”

“Yes,” she replied, and relapsed gratefully into silence, for he had saved her in the nick of time.

But *had* he saved her?

If one means to tell a lie, and it proves unnecessary — what then? She had not decided just what she would say: would that make a difference? And she could not even swear that she *would* have told a lie, at all —

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for she *might* have changed her mind at the final moment. Still —

“Katrina,” her father said, “why — what’s the matter? what made you jump?”

“Oh, how you frightened me!” she said.

“You jumped like a rabbit,” the professor continued, “and bless me! if you haven’t startled *me* with your fidgets. Why I — I can’t think of what I was about to say. Oh, yes, I remember: I was going to ask; that is, I was wondering what kind of a place Mr. Larry has — to live in, I mean. Newspaper-men seldom have much money.”

Katrina pondered.

“Well,” she said, hesitating and almost swallowing every word, “I — I don’t know, father, I’m sure — that is, I’ve heard — that he has a — a very nice place, I believe, father.”

“In a boarding-house?”

“Yes,” was the answer, now more decisive than before — no wonder the barber whispered his secret to the hole — she felt better already. “A very nice room, I believe, with a ribbed ceiling.”

“Beamed, you mean.”

“Beamed, I mean. And with a fireplace, father, and Persian rugs, and a — a dulcimer.”

“A what?”

“A dulcimer.”

“Why, I didn’t know McRae was musical,” the professor said.

“Oh, it’s just for ornament,” Katrina explained.

“What a singular fellow!” her father remarked. “But how did you happen to learn these things.”

“Why I —”

It was lucky that the professor did not see what Katrina saw, there in the room, all white and ghostly, grinning, and beckoning to her with its skinny hands, till her face grew white. It wore a number on its shroud. It was No. 3—if you’re counting the one which she did not tell.

“Why,” she replied, “Mr. Larry told me — told me himself.”

And the Thing vanished, fire flashing from its eyeless sockets and its jaw-bones crunching as it fled.

“Singular fellow,” the professor resumed,

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gazing reflectively into the air. "Not a living soul to love or fondle."

"Oh, yes," cried Katrina, quite cheerful now. "He has a dog — Ponto; and a great big beautiful Angora cat."

"Indeed!" said her father.

"And there is a dear little girl in the room next to him," Katrina went on. "He loves her very much, and calls her the Dink o' Wa-wa Girl."

"The what?"

"The Dink o' Wa-wa Girl, because she is always thirsty."

"Well," said the professor, "I'm glad to hear it. I'm glad he has some sort of ties beyond rum and cigarettes."

Katrina gasped.

"Is he — is he dreadfully fond of rum?" she asked.

"I'm afraid he is," her father answered, sadly. "I don't mean, of course, that he ever gets drunk."

"Then what — what *does* he do with it — with the rum, father?"

"Drinks it, I suppose, but he keeps his head clear. He must, for his work."

PARTICEPS CRIMINIS

Katrina gazed anxiously at her father's face.
It was quite calm.

"What work?" she inquired.

"Why, his writing — of course."

She dropped her eyes, and no more was said. But two days afterward she received this message through the mail:

MY DEAR KATRINA:— I have oiled the panel.

Yours,

L. M.

Katrina answered with a trembling hand:

MY DEAR MR. LARRY:— Really and truly I haven't told any one — only father about your beautiful room and the dulcimer and the little girl. *Nothing else.* Oh, I wish you wouldn't do so any more. Please go and see Mr. Monday. He is our minister. He lives at No. 30 Cunningham Place. For the sake of

Your Little Friend,

KATRINA LONGFORD JUNE.

P. S. See I Corinthians, iii. 13.

VII

A MODERN DULCIMER

ON the following Sabbath the congregation of the Berry Avenue Presbyterian Church contained no listener more devout, more deeply attentive to the long service, or more eager to extract its moral, than Katrina June. She sat forward, the better to observe the Rev. Mr. Monday's face, the ponderous gravity of which was eloquent to her understanding and aroused her hope for the welfare of Mr. Larry's soul. That Mr. Monday had something on his mind there could be no doubt. Seated quietly behind the pulpit, immersed in thought, it was evident to the child that more than a sermon troubled him, and her heart went out to him in sympathy for the sad perplexity in his brooding eyes. Now and again they flashed out, sweeping the pews as if in quest of some absent face; then fell again into that gloomy reverie, which Katrina watched with a growing confidence that she had probed its depths. She herself sent furtive, half-expectant glances

toward the streams of worshipers entering the doors, but Mr. Larry was not among them. If doubt assailed her then, if she began to fear that he had turned deafly from her counsel and entreaty, and that I Corinthians, iii. 13, had failed to do its perfect work, the sight of Mr. Monday rising in the pulpit, tossing his straight black locks from his high forehead as he paused impressively before his text, and the pathetic tones of his Sabbath voice as he gave it out, paused — read it again, and yet again, choosing her face (or so it seemed to her) out of the hundred there, to fix with his grieved and careworn eyes — all this renewed her hope that somewhere, that golden Lord's day morning, there rose to Heaven, afar from offings and their boats and kegs, the incense of a contrite heart.

Yet the sermon was a disillusionment. It was not at all what it should have been under the circumstances. It pertained generally to the blessedness of giving, and specifically to the wheezy decrepitude of the pipe-organ, all undeniably enough, but of what import compared to an immortal soul? Here was no salty flavor of the sea; neither any hint

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of the sheepfold and its ninety and nine, not even a smattering of rejoicing over the one sinner that repenteth—nor indeed anything for which Katrina had vaguely but fondly hoped. Her heart sank as the discourse ended. Doubtless it had been a good one in its way, and the cause was needy, but to Katrina's mind the Rev. Mr. Monday's words, fervent though they were, had not been worthy of his tragic face.

Moreover, it seemed quite certain now that Mr. Larry had not confessed; that he had not sought comfort; that he had ignored, or spurned, her message with the scriptural warning which she had found by accident in quest of solace for her own transgressions, still heavy on her soul. Katrina, rising for the benediction, and joining afterward her classmates in the assembling Sunday school, wore a troubled countenance, and for the first time in their recollection, stumbled in the golden text.

The class, a row of little maids of Katrina's age, all clean and starched, sat in one pew, while the teacher, Mrs. Borrow, sat in another, half turned about to them — a gentle woman

with brown hair turning gray and parted evenly (divided equally to a strand, Katrina thought) under a bonnet becoming to her age and over a brow as fair and mild as any child's in the line before her. Her eyes beamed behind gold-bowed glasses, she spoke softly, and the rustling of her perfect lips as she led the lesson, the satin smoothness of her cheeks, her shell-like ears, the snowy ruching at her throat, the sheen and whisper of her black silk gown, and the seemly elegance of her gloved hands holding the leaflet or the gilt-edged book — all these far more than any words she uttered, far more than any text, or parable, or sacred story, bore home inevitably to the little Katrina's mind the truth and beauty of Christian holiness. Watching those moving lips and marveling at the silvery sibilance which softened, subdued and chastened speech till even the Hebrew genealogies had something lovely in their discordances, Katrina did not mind the whistling. Or rather, Mrs. Borrow did *not* whistle, she maintained stoutly: it was the word's fault, for having S's.

Never before had Mrs. Borrow seemed so perfect as she did to-day to the little fib-teller.

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Every verse of the scripture lesson pointed a reproachful finger at her guilty heart. She believed that her failure in the golden text was a humiliation added unto her for her great unworthiness.

In the holy calm of the Sabbath evening a child passed swiftly with flushed face and beating heart into a dingy, old-fashioned street, awed by the settled melancholy of its rows of discolored, weather-beaten houses, and distrustful of every sound in a neighborhood which she had never seen before. She was seeking for a number, but when she found it, and after passing it twice at least in her confusion, she paused, breathless, and turned as if to flee—only to turn again, and finally run to the forbidding door. She pulled the bell.

“Is Mr. Larry — in?” she asked huskily.

“Mr. McRae, you mean?”

“Yeth.”

“He won’t be in for an hour yet, and maybe not then,” replied the woman at the door.
“What d’you want? D’you want to leave a message?”

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"N-no," said Katrina. "That is — no, thank you. I guess I'll wait."

"Wait!" cried the woman. "You might wait till midnight. Humph! I should think you might. Never can tell when *he'll* get home. But you can come in if you want to."

Katrina shrank back. This was not a cheerful woman, nor a tidy one. Her hair struggled from its combs, and there was a harried look in her glum and greasy features and a note of petulance in her discordant voice.

"Well, ain't you coming?"

Katrina obeyed — *instantly!* She could never account for it. She had made up her mind *not* to go in, when, suddenly, the woman spoke, and before she was aware — without having taken a single step that she could ever remember! — there she was in the gloom of an *enormous* hall (as she told Betty Wendell afterward) and at the foot of the narrowest, steepest, creepiest stairs that you ever saw! She had time to notice them — *just* time — when the door went Bang! shutting out the daylight — and Katrina jumped.

She had been taken suddenly!

By an Intuition!

She knew it by the way her heart . . . why, this woman, don't you see?—no wonder! — she was a *smuggleress*, of course!

“The parlor's taken,” croaked the hag. “All our rooms are. You can sit down in mine.”

“Oh, no, no, no! No thank you,” Katrina cried, much louder than the distance warranted “I'd rather — oh, if you don't mind — wait in Mr. Larry's, please; in Mr. Larry's apartment.”

The woman eyed her in some astonishment.

“Well, you needn't get so excited about it. So you'd rather wait in Mr. Larry's room?”

“Oh, yes if you please. *Please.*”

“Are you a relative of Mr. Larry's?”

“No, I'm — just a friend.”

The smuggleress eyed her from head to foot.

“Well,” she said, “I guess you can go up, if you want to. It's the first door to the right and it's never locked. But you'll find it dull up there. My room's better.”

“Oh, *I* shan't mind,” Katrina cried, delightedly. “I'll play with the kitty.”

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She paused with her foot upon the dreadful stair.

“The dog won’t bite, will he?” she asked.

The woman stared.

“There ain’t any dog up there.”

“Oh, then I’m not afraid,” Katrina answered. Ponto was out, doubtless, with his master, so she ran lightly up the stairs, wondering a little at not hearing the voice of the Dink o’Wa-wa Girl. Nor was there a smell of liquor; the air was musty, but quite innocent of the fumes of rum.

At the top she paused.

“First to the right,” came a voice from below, and Katrina started.

“Oh, yes!” she said, taking another step. Captain Kidd’s pistol, she reflected, would scarcely go off if she walked softly — so as not to jiggle the Portuguese chest.

“To the right, I said!”

“Oh, yes, thank you,” Katrina answered, and breathing deeply, she laid her little gloved trembling hand upon the smuggler’s door.

She opened it — but shut it hastily, and before she knew it, she was on the stairs again.

“Oh!” she said, “I beg your pardon.”

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"What's the matter now?" asked the crone below.

"I g-got the wrong door," Katrina stammered. She was all a-tremble.

"Why, no you didn't. What are you talking about?"

"But I wanted Mr. Larry's — Mr. McRae's apartment," said the little girl.

"*That* was Mr. McRae's — apartment, as you call it. First to the right, I told you, didn't I?"

"Why no!" cried Katrina. "It *can't* be!"

"Well it *is*, I tell you," was the sharp rejoinder. "I ought to know, I guess; I'm running this here house."

"But *that*," said Katrina, "was such a stuffy little place!"

"Stuffy little place!" returned Mrs. Withers, stepping forward menacingly. "Stuffy little place! What do you mean by a stuffy little place? I'll have you to know I don't have stuffy little places in *my* house, young lady. I'd like to catch Lawrence McRae calling that a stuffy little place! *He* don't complain. I don't see why you should."

Katrina gasped.

“But where’s the fireplace?”

“Fireplace!”

“And the dulcimer?”

“The what?”

“The dulcimer? And the Angora cat?”

Katrina cried.

Mrs. Withers stared.

“The dulc — say: you’re a funny little girl. Where’d *you* come from? We’ve got a tom-cat in the back yard, but that ain’t saying it’s a Angora, or a Dulcimer either. And if you must know, it’s plain maltee and yellar, mixed.”

Katrina was clinging to the rail.

“Hasn’t Mr. Larry any cat? — or dog? — or anything?”

Mrs. Withers grinned.

“Oh, g’wan!” she said. “No! He’s been stringin’ you.”

“Been what?” Katrina asked.

“He’s been jollying you.”

Katrina stared.

“Then it isn’t true?” she asked, her voice trembling.

“Well,” Mrs. Withers replied, “this here dulcimer cat business ain’t true, for one thing.”

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“What else has he been giving you?”

Katrina hesitated.

“Well, *I* thought,” she explained, “that Mr. Larry had a *large* room, with a fireplace, and rugs, and a dog, and a cat. He *said* he had a lovely room.”

“Did *he*!” cried the landlady. “Did *he* say that?”

“Why yes; he said it had a beautiful ceiling.”

“And well he might,” Mrs. Withers replied proudly. “He likes it, does he? he ought to: it cost ten cents a roll. But this here fireplace business —”

She shook her head, and regarded Katrina with much compassion.

“Is there a little girl here?” Katrina asked suddenly, “called the Dink o’ Wa-wa girl?”

Mrs. Withers gasped.

“The Dink o’ — did *he* tell you that?”

Katrina nodded, and the landlady burst into a paroxysm of delight.

“Well, I’ll be — what did you say he called her?”

“The Dink o’ Wa-wa girl,” Katrina replied, her face flushing. She began to fear that she had told too much.

"Well, what d'you think of that?" Mrs. Withers cried. "The Dinky—what did he call her?"

"The Dink o' Wa-wagirl," Katrina repeated.

"And I *never* have children in my house," said Mrs. Withers. "He knows that. It doesn't pay; they spoil the wall-paper. Now he knows that."

She gazed curiously at Katrina.

"Well, I swan. I never heard anything like it. And you a friend of his! Well, that's the reason, I suppose. What did you say your name was?"

"Katrina — Katrina June."

"Mine's Mrs. Withers. You've heard him speak of *me*, I guess. Come, now, what's he been a-telling you about me?"

"Nothing," Katrina answered, descending another step or two. "He never even mentions you — honestly. And I wish, Mrs. Withers, if you don't mind, that you wouldn't tell him that I've been here."

"I see. You don't want to let on that you know he's been a-stringin' you — eh?"

"No," said Katrina. "And oh, Mrs. Withers, I'm so, so glad!"

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“Glad he’s been a-stringin’ you!”

“Oh, it’s a great relief, Mrs. Withers.”

“Well, now, that’s singular. You say you’re glad he’s been a —”

“Oh, yes, Mrs. Withers.”

“You’re glad, but you don’t want him to know you’re glad. Is that it?”

“That’s it, Mrs. Withers.”

“Well, well,” the landlady said, “that’s odd now. You’re a very funny little girl. You’re glad he’s —”

“Well, you see, Mrs. Withers, it’s this way: and I don’t mind telling you — he’s been here so long, and you’re almost a mother to him now, I suppose.”

“Mother to him! Good gracious, how old do you think I am? *He’s* no spring chicken!”

“Oh, I didn’t mean that,” Katrina hastened to explain. “I meant that you kind of looked after him.”

“If I should say I did,” was the reply. “He leaves his things lying around so.”

“And so,” said Katrina, “I can tell *you*, Mrs. Withers, for I know you won’t tell.”

“Tell!” was the prompt assurance. “I should think not. No one can ever accuse

Sarah Withers of telling anything, if she's told not to."

"Well, you see, Mrs. Withers. *I* thought —"

Katrina paused.

"I thought he was something *dreadful*."

"Dreadful!" repeated the landlady. "In my house!"

"Yes," said Katrina, "I thought he was a smuggler."

"A smuggler!"

For a moment Mrs. Withers stood, heaving with the approaching outburst, which broke so suddenly and with such a shower and cackling that Katrina retreated a step higher up the stairs. It soon passed though, and the landlady, wiping her eyes, recovered what voice was left to her.

"Did *he* tell you that?"

Katrina nodded.

"That is," she replied hastily, "he didn't just *say* so, but he hinted at it."

"That man! That man!" Mrs. Withers marveled. "And you thought — oh I see! *That's* why you're so glad he's been a-stringin' you?"

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“Of course,” said Katrina.

“Naturally!” cried Mrs. Withers.

“Naturally,” echoed Katrina.

Mrs. Withers shook her head.

“Well, well, well, well!”

“Now you won’t say a word, Mrs. Withers?”

“Not a word! Not a syllable. Not a living syllable will I breathe, I promise you. Dear me! I never heard of such a thing!”

“Then I’ll say good evening, Mrs. Withers.”

“Good-by, poor dear; and don’t you fret. You just be easy. He’ll never even dream of it.”

Katrina flew down the steps like a bird uncaged. She jumped; she skipped; she ran — singing to herself, over and over:

Goosey—goosey ga—ander,

Mr. Larry’s not a smu—ugler!

Goosey—goosey—gander!

Mr. Larry’s—not—a—smuggler!

— all the way home.

There remains something to be told. That night the professor — he could not remember

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when his little daughter had been so blithe, so tender, so brimming over — the professor, seated in his reading chair, was astounded at the things he heard. She told him the awful secret that was neither awful nor a secret, after all; she showed him Mr. Larry's letter, which she had never had the heart to burn; and she told him what Mrs. Withers said — keeping for the very last that final remnant on her conscience:

“So, you see, I was *not* like mother, when I said I guessed.”

“You are more than ever like your mother,” he assured her fondly, stroking her hair. “*She* never liked fibs, either — not even Christmas ones.”

That was all he said.

“Do you think,” he asked, “that Mrs. Withers will go and tell?”

“Oh, no, father! She *never* does.”

“So?”

“Why, she said as much. And *you* mustn’t tell, father — and I won’t — and we’ll just let him *think* I think he’s a smuggler.”

“We won’t say a word,” the professor answered. “We’ll just look scandalized.”

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“Oh, you mustn’t do that!” Katrina warned him. “That would *never* do. *You’re* not supposed to know, you know. And the trouble is,” she added, frowning, “*I* never see him.”

“Then how can we punish him?” the professor asked.

“I know!” cried Katrina, “I’ll send him tracts!”

“The very thing!” her father answered — and the thing was done.

But two days afterward a covered something-or-other arrived by messenger for the Junes.

“It’s a bird-cage, father, I do believe!”

It was a bird-cage.

“And there’s something in it! Alive! A bird, father!”

It was *not* a bird; but a card attached settled all doubts of its identity:

A Dulcimer Tom-Cat
from Mr. Larry
to Katrina June.

VIII

THE OPTIMIST

IF Mr. Larry's editorial account of the professor's history had failed to achieve any marked result in the book's behalf, it had drawn to him in a large measure the author's gratitude, and it proved the basis of a growing friendliness between the men. Katrina never saw Mr. Larry, who, for some unaccountable reason, and on one pretext or another, continued to decline all invitations to Abercrombie Street, but Professor June dropped in at the *Herald* office now and then to walk homeward in the late afternoon with the one man of all the world who had caught the spirit of his *magnum opus*, and who, with that gentle art of interviewing at his tongue's end, managed to extract from the guileless dreamer far more than he ever realized, leaving him conscious only of having found a humorously sympathetic friend. It troubled him a little to note so frequently a tone of what he called pessimism in Mr. Larry's voice. The human race

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was divided into two classes, in the professor's mind — pessimists and optimists — and one or the other a man must be; there could be no mingling of discordant elements. As for himself he was an optimist.

"If a man obeys the Golden Rule," he was wont to say, "he will get his deserts, in time."

"Ah, yes," Mr. Larry replied, puffing reflectively at his cigarette. "In time, perhaps, but not necessarily A. D."

The professor smiled.

"Which is to say," he began, "that you are in one of your —"

"Which is only to say," Mr. Larry interposed mildly, "that if a man ever needs faith in a world to come, it is when he begins to model his life on the Golden Rule; which, again, is only another way of saying that if a man keeps the Golden Rule with a sneaking idea that it will win him an earthly crown, he is in grave danger of perplexity in his old age."

The professor was silent.

"And doesn't it strike you," Mr. Larry inquired, "that the hope of earthly reward is a mighty low kind of reason for keeping the

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Golden Rule, or the Ten Commandments, or any other moral law?"

"I am an optimist," the professor replied. "I always look on the bright side of things. Every cloud, you know, has —"

"I know, professor. I know that cloud."

"The Man of Nazareth," Professor June began —

"Was scarcely what you call an optimist," the editor interposed, "as far as this world is concerned. He knew it for a battle-ground, and life for an ordeal; and in His greater agony and martyrdom He set men an example of how they should endure their lesser ones."

"Ah, yes, but the world is a beautiful world," the professor declared.

"Naturally beautiful," said Mr. Larry. "The skies are as blue over sinners as over saints. The stars shine as serenely upon murder as upon lover's trysts."

"But life is beautiful too," the professor argued.

"Never so beautiful," Mr. Larry answered, "as in the endurance of its tragedy."

"But has it no joys for you?" the professor asked. "No gaiety?"

"Gaiety? yes," said Mr. Larry. "I can jig with you upon occasion."

He smiled agreeably at his companion, adding, "But I fancy, professor, that the truest joy a man can know is in the knowledge that he has fought well; that he has turned, perhaps, outward defeat into inward victory; that he has kept God's rule golden in spite of the devil in himself and in other men."

"I have more confidence in my fellows," replied the optimist. "I will stake my life on the Golden Rule."

Mr. Larry smiled.

"Your next life, professor, not this one. Your rule, my friend, will win you heaven, but not the earth."

The professor shook his head.

"You are a pessimist," he said sadly.

"Pessimist?" Mr. Larry inquired. "What's a pessimist? There is joy and sorrow in the world, that's all I know; and there seems some reason for it — some good reason, I daresay. And good and evil have contended in every human soul, saint and sinner, since they ribbed Adam. Life's not a garden party. Eden was locked up long ago."

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The professor's head continued to protest. Calmly confident of his own view point, and like many another mild-mannered reasoner far less open to conviction than men more turbulent in debate, the professor continued to assert his smiling generalities on the text that the world was better than it had ever been; continued to confide his visions and to paint millenniums, and if disconcerted, momentarily, by Mr. Larry's humorous scorn, consoled himself with the reflection that it was the outburst of a curious and fervent nature and in all probability, but half-assumed for the humor's sake. Being an optimist he could not consistently admit that other men believed more than half they uttered.

"No," the little man would say, "you are not a pessimist, at heart, McRae. You are an optimist like myself, though you won't admit it." Then Mr. Larry would laugh softly and change the subject, preferably to Katrina, whose sayings and doings he heard always with as avowed an optimism as the professor's own.

"It only goes to prove," the professor would remark afterward to Katrina, recalling for her

benefit the harmless arguments of the afternoon, "that barks and bites are two different matters, and that you can't judge a man by what he says. Why, just to show you," he cited to her, on one occasion, "there was that question of the water board scandal. I didn't mention it in the history, and McRae disapproved.

"'Come now,' I said, 'you don't mean to say that you think the charge was true? Do you think John Knox Watkins would *steal*?'

"'Steal!' he cried. 'He would have stolen the gas-pipe out of a vacant house?'

"'But my dear fellow,' I pointed out, 'Watkins was a deacon in the—'

"'Exactly,' he replied. 'So much the worse for his immortal soul. Why June,' said he, 'they teach book-keeping up at your college on the hill. Do you mean to tell me that you think the business of the world is carried on in the honest, accurate, Complete Arithmetic, seventh-decimal way you teach your boys to keep their books in? Do you think the city's books were kept that way when Watkins was head of the water board and five hundred thousand dollars of the public funds —'

“And on he went, declaring that if our civic virtue didn’t need reforming, what had I written my history for? And if men were honest enough already, what need was there for my scheme to teach better citizenship in the schools?

“Well — I laughed and soothed him: I told him that I hated scoundrels as much as he did, but ‘Mac,’ said I, ‘I believe most men are honest — *mean* to be, that is, — and if they are not, I think it is because they see things from a wrong point of view, as a rule, and not because they are rogues intentionally.’

“Well, sir, you should have seen him throw up his hands at that!

“‘June,’ said he, ‘there is no use in talking of the world to a man who walks through it with his eyes on heaven and his nose buried in a bunch of garden-flowers. “What do you see?” you ask him. “See? Stars, my dear fellow—stars! I see a *million* stars!” “And what do you smell?” “Smell? (Sniff. Sniff.) De-licious! I smell a rose!”””

The professor shook with merriment.

“Laugh?” he cried, turning to Katrina with the tears rolling down his cheeks, “I thought

I should split. Imagine him piping up in a little high squeaking voice:

“‘Smell? (Sniff. Sniff.) *De-licious!* I smell a rose!’”

Katrina smiled.

“Oh, father, isn’t he funny?”

“He’s a droll fellow, and no mistake,” the professor answered. “A droll fellow, Mac is. ‘Why, June,’ said he, ‘Watkins ought to have been hung. No, hanging would have been too good for that thief. He ought to have been roasted on a gridiron. Put *that* in your history: tell your boys that every city should have its gridiron to roast its traitors on.’

“But I only laughed. I told him that it was my firm belief that no man was ever so unregenerate that he couldn’t be reached by milder measures. You should have heard him then!

“‘Fiddlesticks! Fear of the devil, not love of the Lord, was sufficient to keep men’s hands out of other men’s pockets. What a keen, discriminating chronicler I would make,’ he said, ‘if I only *would* tackle the life of Nero — or Catherine de Medici — or some other *gentle soul gone wrong!*’”

The professor chuckled.

“Fancy, Katrina! Old Nero — ‘gentle soul gone wrong!’”

“Now another man,” the professor continued, “might have been offended, might have thought him quarrelsome, but — bless your soul! — I knew Mac’s heart. I knew that when he’d fired off his cartridges, and the smoke had cleared, he’d come around; so I only laughed.

“‘My dear McRae,’ I said, ‘I have given up thinking evil of my fellow-men.’

“‘Good Lord!’ he cried. ‘When did you *ever* think evil of your fellow-men?’

“‘Oh, I have,’ I said. ‘I used to, Mac, but it made me miserable, and it did no good; so I gave it up.’

“‘June,’ said he, and the weather was clearing I knew, by the way he said it: ‘June, you’re the damndest, cheeriest soul I ever knew!’”

“*Father!*”

“Well, he did; he did, I tell you. I’m only telling you what he said. ‘June,’ said he, ‘You’re the damndest, cheeriest —’”

“Why, *father!*”

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The professor was shaking with delight.

"That's what he said. I'm only telling you. Yes, sir; he said I was the —"

"*Father!*" cried the little girl peremptorily, and the professor paused, and wiped his eyes.

"I knew he'd come around," he said, folding his hands about one knee, and gazing dreamily into the fire. "He wouldn't hurt a fly, Mac wouldn't. Why, I explained to him; explained the whole Watkins matter; explained it quietly, without a word of prejudice either way; told him the story of Watkins's life, and the good he'd done — the hospital he built, the college he endowed, the poor he helped, and the Sunday school that he led for years. And now,' said I, 'just balance all that, Mac, coolly and fairly, against the blind, unthinking anger of the time, and the long trial, and the jury's disagreement, and all those public events that prejudiced you against that unconvicted — mind you, Mac — that *unconvicted* man!'

"Still he was stubborn. He didn't say much, but he muttered something about unconvicted rogues would fill all the jails in Christendom seven times over. But I only

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smiled. I knew his reason would return in time.

“‘Mac,’ said I, ‘I know more of Watkins than you think. He was a distant cousin of my wife.’

“‘Mac started up. ‘What’s that?’ he asked; so I repeated it. ‘Yes, sir: he was a distant cousin of my wife. *She* knew the story, and *she* knew the man — and a kinder parent you never heard of. But I said to her frankly: “My dear Katrina, we are writing a history of the town. What *must* hurt, must hurt, even if it strikes our kith and kin.” Well, she agreed with me. She was always sensible, Katrina was, and she was heart and soul with me in that blessed history: took the old files,’ I told him, ‘and the city records, and wrote down notes, thousands of them — dated them — grouped them in years — why, I have a drawer full.’ I told Mac that, and how when I spoke to her, she said ‘yes, you are right William; we must do our duty — but if I can prove to you that Cousin John did as much good as other people say he did harm?’ ‘Why, then,’ said I, ‘we’ll drop the matter without a line.’ ‘Well,’ I told him ‘she

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proved it, Mac; brought me the documents, gave me a list of his benefactions, in black and white — *one million dollars!*”

The professor rose to his feet at the mere memory of such philanthropy.

“*One-million dollars, Mac!*” I said to him.”

“And what did he say to that?” Katrina asked.

“‘June,’ said he, ‘we’ll take her word for it,’ and was just as quiet as a lamb. “Which only proves,” the professor added, “that with all his bluster, Lawrence McRae has as gentle and reasonable a soul as any man.”

IX

PATERNAL PROBLEMS

THERE are no troubles in the world so easy to be borne as other people's, Mr. Larry observed in his "Cap and Bells," and he used to say that as a newspaper-man he had endured cheerfully an amount of suffering such as only a doctor, or a lawyer perhaps, or an undertaker could comprehend. Fire and flood, disease and murder, and all the evils that flesh is heir to, had left him smiling and stout of heart, and he was wont to add that had it not been for a few small annoyances of his own to deal with, a disappointment or trifling misfortune now and then, or sharp regret, he would have been, beyond question (barring the professor), the blithest of men. Gazing about him upon a fretting and stewing world, he was wont to marvel at the wry faces other men made, and at the pains they took, after the fashion of their boyhood, to step over cracks — only, perhaps, to fall head-foremost into the next mill-pond, a fate unpleasant but

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too well-deserved to call for pity, and not to be compared to one's own duckings, which, he subtly observed, were much more *wet*. Jones, for example, was worth a million — rode in his carriage — why in the dumps? Brown was a study in vulgar lustiness — knew not dyspepsia, dietetics, therapeutics, balms, pellets or squills — what call had *he* then, to bay the moon? A thousand blue devils, Mr. Larry reflected, had homes to yowl in, while he passed Withers-ward under their windows, snatching a whiff of their fragrant sirloins, or watching their children about their lamps.

Even an optimist, it appeared, could claim some trouble now and then — no less an optimist than William June! — and with no more reason than his own Katrina! To his friend, the bachelor, Katrina's childhood was a fairy valley in which she played and sang, and was now a goose-girl, but would be a shepherdess — by and by a queen. Why shake one's head over such an idyl?

“She's an angel, William!”

The professor smiled. “Is she not?” he said; “but, Mac —”

He frowned anxiously.

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"Am I doing right by that poor child? Am I doing the best for her? I'm not a woman to think of everything."

"You worry like one," the bachelor scornfully replied. "You cluck like a hen. By George, you do! Why I'd crow, William; I'd flap my wings; I'd be a merry old rooster if I had a child — like Katrina."

"Yes, but she's motherless," the father answered. "It's a responsibility you cannot dream of, to bring up a motherless little girl."

"Tut! Tut!" the bachelor retorted gallantly. "Just let her grow, man. Let her come up, like the grass of the meadow, the lilies of the field, like a crocus, William. Trust to the rain and the sun. You're only the gardener."

"I suppose you're right," the professor answered. "She's like her mother — more like her mother every day. Still —"

He paused, doubtfully. Here in that blessed human inconsistency, that saving grace which keeps men brothers against their will, he had forgotten to be an optimist. It was an oversight, but this was a question of his own fatherhood. For the nonce he had exchanged

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characters with Mr. Larry; the bachelor was the rosy theorist now, the professor the man of facts.

It was a night in autumn and the professor and Mr. Larry, meeting by chance, had walked slowly in the direction of the boarding-house, the steps of which were already occupied in spite of the coolness in the air.

"Won't you come up?" Mr. Larry asked.

"I would like to," the other replied, surprised, "but it is growing late."

"It does not matter," was the prompt assurance, so they mounted the stairs to the smuggler's den, which the professor examined with a knowing and curious eye. Smiling together over Katrina's visit there, they removed their coats and Mr. Larry seated his guest in the one soft chair the room afforded, while he stretched himself, smoking, upon the bed.

"Think," he said, "of the Intuitions she must have had."

The professor nodded. There was a very fond light in his eyes as he replied.

"Dear Trina! She was always an old little thing. That comes, I suppose from not having her mother. Mac —"

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The professor hesitated. He glanced timidly at the long, lean, reclining figure of Mr. Larry, whose profile had never seemed to him so like an Indian's as it did now with the thin blue smoke from the cigarette curling upward about those swarthy, melancholy features — hair drooping, lids drooping, nose down, lips down; no hint whatever of what his thoughts might be, or what his mood was; no slightest glimmer of assurance that the professor's confidence might not awaken those stolid muscles into the scornful life he knew so well, and just now feared. The truth was: the little professor had a gentle awe, sometimes, of Mr. Larry.

"Mac," he said, "I know your views, but I'm rather troubled about the child."

"Why? Nothing wrong, I hope. She's well, isn't she?"

"Perfectly. That is, I believe so. I hope so," the professor answered.

"What then?"

"Mac," said the father, earnestly, "she doesn't *laugh*. She doesn't laugh, I tell you."

The Indian profile slowly awoke; the head

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turned, and the eyes were lifted into a stare of inquiry and mild astonishment.

“What’s that?”

“She doesn’t laugh, I tell you,” the professor repeated, now much agitated with the thought. “I’ve been noticing lately, and she doesn’t laugh like other girls. *That* isn’t youth, Mac. The house ought to ring with laughter. Mine doesn’t.”

Mr. Larry continued to regard the professor with calm surprise.

“Well,” he said, “how do you explain it, William?”

“I don’t explain it,” the professor replied. “That’s just the point. That’s just what troubles me. She’s happy apparently, but she isn’t noisy like other girls. I’ve only just noticed it. She doesn’t romp.”

“You ought to play with her,” said Mr. Larry.

The professor brightened.

“Oh, I do,” he said. “We do play together.”

“Do you play games together?” Mr. Larry asked.

“Yes. Yes. We play every evening — every evening.”

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Mr. Larry did not speak at once.

"What?" he inquired with grave deliberation—"just what do you play, William?"

"Cribbage, Mac. We play cribbage every evening."

Mr. Larry's voice was very mild:

"Cribbage, William?"

"Cribbage, Mac." The professor's face was now aglow. "It's a good game," he asserted; "a good game, Mac. And sometimes—sometimes we play checkers."

Mr. Larry shook his head.

"William, William," he said earnestly, "you really must be careful."

"Careful? How do you mean?"

"Careful of your heart, William," Mr. Larry replied, taking refuge again in the drooping profile. "Not to get overheated, you know—with your exertions, William."

"Why," the professor replied, "cribbage is not what you call a strenuous game, Mac, or checkers either. I don't just grasp your point of view."

"It doesn't matter," was the answer. "Simply take care of yourself, that's all. You play other games, I suppose: Slide down the banisters now and then?"

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The professor laughed.

"Oh, I see, you're joking," he replied. "But you don't seem to understand cribbage, Mac. Cribbage is a game of cards."

"Yes, yes, I know," Mr. Larry drawled softly, still smoking in a sad and thoughtful way. "I had an aunt who adored the game; *she* said it was — circumspect, I believe her word was. Mind, I don't ask, or even advise you to give it up — only be careful, that is all. But what I want to get at is: don't you ever romp, and raise the roof with Katrina — and her friends? She must know girls of the romping kind. Now a proper father romps with his child — tousles her, tickles her, pulls her hair, plays bear with her, William. *I* would — with Katrina."

"Why, Mac," said the professor, "I'm fifty-one!"

The profile vanished.

"Good heavens, man! What's fifty-one? — when you're a father?"

The professor was silent. Mr. Larry lighted another cigarette and puffed as reflectively and gloomily as before.

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“What else, William?” he inquired more gently. “What else do you do?”

“Well,” was the reply, though in a tone less confident than before, “we have the — stereopticon views.”

“Ah, yes, to be sure,” Mr. Larry murmured; “Stereopticon views. Foreign travel, William?”

“Well, yes, in a way,” the professor answered. “Ruins; temples; *bas reliefs*; architectural details — ancient remains, you know. Beautiful views! Beautiful! And some colored. Professor Keppler gave them to me before he died.”

“Katrina would dote on them,” Mr. Larry suggested.

“Yes; she is immensely taken with them. She is making a collection of antique coins.”

“And what else, William? You take her to the circus, now and then, of course? And *Uncle Tom's Cabin?*”

“N-no,” was the reply, “but we do go out, Mac, if that's what you mean. Oh, I'm not so thoughtless as you may think. Why, only last week I took her to Joffett's. You know Joffett, of course?”

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“Well, yes — Joffett. You took her to Joffett’s?” The tone was incredulous.

“Yes,” said the professor. “You may not have heard, but Henry Joffett has one of the finest private collections in the country, if not in the world.”

“Collection?” Mr. Larry inquired suspiciously. “Collection of what?”

“Mummies.”

“*Mummies!*”

The professor nodded.

“And mummy cases. It’s celebrated. The National History Museum of New York City has offered him — by George, I forget. It’s a large sum, though. You must see it, Mac.”

“Good God, William! Cribbage! Coins! Ancient architecture! *Mummies!* You don’t suppose that the child can laugh on a diet like that, do you?”

Mr. Larry had risen from the bed and was prowling up and down the chamber.

“Why, my dear William, she ought to be playing pull-away, and going to circuses, and taffy-pulls, and hitching on bobs, and having beaux!”

The professor gasped.

“Having beaux, Mac!”

“Sure!” was Mr. Larry’s answer. “Maybe you don’t know that I was Sissy Budd’s beau for a whole summer, up at Perkins’s. *She wasn’t eleven then.*”

Mr. Larry waved his cigarette.

“Instead,” he resumed, “instead of the joys of life, what do we discover in Katrina’s case? Lovely child — the constant companion of a — an elderly literary gentleman — who feeds her on thin slices of stereopticon views, and cribbage salad, till she’s the nicest, cleverest little long-worded thing you ever saw, William — and a darling, by thunder! — but without a rope skipped! without one wild, frolicsome screeching moment! — or lover’s greeting — to call to mind when she grows up and just naturally *spinsters* away, like a hollyhock after frost!”

The professor stared.

“Mac,” he said, “is it as bad as that?”

“Well, no,” Mr. Larry replied judiciously, “I won’t say that. I may have emphasized things a little, William, but I wanted you to see them as a father should.”

“Mac,” said the professor, gravely. “I have been very blind.”

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The bachelor regarded the repentant father with some complacency.

"You see what I'm driving at, don't you, William?"

"Perfectly," was the sad reply. "I've been a fool, Mac."

"Oh, no." Mr. Larry assured him, assuming a more cheerful air. "I wouldn't go as far as that, William. You may have been a trifle thoughtless. All men are. But it isn't too late. At least that's what Sissy Budd said when I asked her to marry me. I guess I was ten."

But the professor's mind was not at Perkins's. "I don't think I ever really learned to play," he said slowly, fumbling with his watch chain. "Father never played. He was a farmer, and poor, and without much schooling; and my! how he loved a book! Why, books came from heaven — school books, I mean. 'William,' he used to say when he caught me idling, 'William, do you know you're a thief, sir? Well, you are. You are stealing an hour — from eternity.'"

The professor pondered.

"He was a stern man, father was, but he

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tried to do the best for me. He saved, for my sake — he and mother — scrimped and saved and sent me down east, where the books were then. I went to Harvard. It was little enough I had to live on, but I made it do. I *have known hunger.*"

The professor rose and began to pace up and down the room.

"Winters," he said, "I was pretty cold, sometimes, but it didn't daunt me. It was hard *then*, but I knew what those books would win me in the end. Why, I'd study till morning, while other fellows sky-larked. I could hear them, midnights, under my window, wasting their time — frittering it away in useless idleness. Many's the night I prayed for them, on my knees."

He paused by Mr. Larry's bureau, fingering the brushes there.

"They were wrong, of course," he said mildly, "spending their parents' hard-earned dollars in vicious ways, but they had what I never had: youth and laughter, and college songs — and warm blood running through their veins, while I was shivering."

He shrugged his shoulders.

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“It was mighty cold, Mac. But I won some honors,” he added proudly, half-smiling at the recollection. His eyes rested upon Mr. Larry, but without seeing him.

“And then?” said the bachelor.

“Why, I came away.”

The professor leaned back against the bureau and folded his arms.

“Do you know,” he said, “strangely enough, some of those very fellows I used to pray for have reformed! Yes, sir; become useful citizens! — why, taken places *I'd* like to fill!”

Mr. Larry nodded.

“It's the way of the world, William,” he replied. “The world's not made of books, you know, but men.”

The professor pondered.

“I guess you're right, Mac! not books but men.”

He continued to lean thoughtfully against the bureau, gazing into air and speaking at intervals, still of the past and sometimes wistfully, though in his face there was but the dimmest shadow of his regret. His old smile hovered there, and his brown eyes beamed with his innocent reveries, reminding

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Mr. Larry, puffing and listening in his sober worldliness, that though William June had had no youth, as he had said, he was still a child.

“I have always wondered,” the professor said, “how Katrina Longford came to marry me. Dear girl, she knew other, and likelier, and younger, men. One especially — an odd, wild sort of fellow, I’ve heard it said — was deep in love with her, before I knew her. I never saw him.”

The professor’s face grew very tender.

“I wish you could have known my wife,” he said. “Katrina’s like her — like her to a T. Why, only this morning I was standing by the window looking out upon the street. I didn’t hear her till she held me fast, but turning my head a little, then, I caught her profile in the mirror on the wall. Mac —”

The professor gasped.

“It was her mother there!”

Mr. Larry sprang to his feet.

“Professor,” he cried, “have another cigarette!”

The professor stared. Mr. Larry laughed.

“That’s so; you don’t smoke, do you,” he said. “Well, I’ll have another, then.”

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The professor roused himself.

“By George!” he said, “do you know what time it is? It’s midnight, Mac! And that poor child’s waiting up for me!”

“Does she wait up for you?” Mr. Larry asked.

“Always,” was the answer, “just like her mother, however late. I’ve begged her not to, but when I get home, there I’ll find her waiting in my chair.”

“In your chair?” Mr. Larry repeated, helping the professor with his coat.

“Yes,” said the father. “I’ll stop by the lilacs before I go in, to catch a glimpse of her, through the study window. And there she’ll be, all wrapped up in a little Red Riding Hood kind of thing, and nodding over her book, or asleep may be — and *there’s* a picture, Mac, I tell you! Well — I’ll say good night. Won’t you come and see us? You never do, you know, and it troubles Katrina. Come.”

“By George, I will!” Mr. Larry cried — “if you don’t mind, William. It’s only midnight. Hold on a minute till I get my hat!”

X

KATRINA'S DIARY

OCTOBER 1. — It is just one year ago to-day that I began to keep my diary. Ah, me! How many things have happened since that day — Cleopatra's kittens grown up into four gray cats as fine as one could wish to see — poor Carlo dead — I shall never, never forget that dreadful morning we laid him to rest beyond the cabbages. Alas! the tears I shed. Dear doggie! I shall never see you or hear you bark or beg any more. How strange life is! So much for the animal kingdom. Our human circle remains unbroken, for which I ought to be very thankful indeed, and am. As to myself I have made some progress in my intellectual experience. Not only have I passed with an A in all my studies but I have perused *Little Dorrit*, *Old Curiosity Shop*, part of his *Child's History of England*, *Little Women* (twice), *The Yellow Fairy Book*, *The Green Fairy Book*, *The Blue Fairy Book*, and at intervals *Selections from the World's Best Poets*,

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to say nothing of shorter works too numerous to mention. I have joined the Y. P. S. C. E. Otherwise I am well and happy, and I pray that I may be a good daughter to my dear father and that he may be spared to me through the coming year and many more is the prayer of his affectionate child.

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OCTOBER 4.—I am reading the loveliest story. It is called *Persuasion* by Jane Austen. It is so old-fashioned and true to life, and Anne is just what I want to be some day, God willing.

OCTOBER 5.—Late last night as I was sitting in my father's study reading *Persuasion*, who should come in with him but Mr. Larry! It was most awkward, for I was in my red slumber-robe which my Aunt Miranda gave me for Christmas a year ago. At first he seemed as shy as I, and would have gone away, I think, without looking, had I not (fortunately) recovered my presence of mind, for my dear father's sake, and proffered him chocolate, which he drank with relish.. After which we chatted of minor matters, Mr. Larry presuming to joke with me, declaring up and



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down that I had been caught napping over my book, which was most unjust, and not true at all, for how could I have been asleep when I heard them come up the steps together and open the door? He said they *saw* me through the window, but I told him plainly that it was not my custom to fall asleep over books, having been a *great reader* almost from infancy. With much difficulty I kept my temper, remembering that he was *our guest*, and knowing how father would feel if there was a scene, or anything. He was most disagreeable, though far be it from me to judge, for he seemed embarrassed from the first, doubtless by my predicament.

OCTOBER 6.—How different men are. Father is so gentle and listens respectfully to what one says, and if one makes a mistake or anything is *always* a gentleman. It is *otherwise* I find with other men. How proud I ought to be to possess so kind a father, and am, and I shall always endeavor to remember and be thankful for all the happy, happy hours we have spent together, talking over books and other serious and improving subjects, and not merely joking in the silly way men often

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have. While he is spared to me I shall never marry. Indeed I have never even thought of such a thing.

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OCTOBER 8.—Mary Brown is very angry with her mother for not letting her go down town nights after school. One ought never to be angry with one's mother, for she is only trying to do the best she can. Besides, candy decays the teeth. Mary was quite cross with me and said I didn't know what I was talking about. I suppose she meant because I didn't have any mother. Well it seems to me that a girl doesn't have to have one to know how a mother feels. I am sure that when *I* have a daughter I shall be *very* careful. That is what a mother is for, and I shall make a great pet of my little girl and her name shall be Mignon or Gwendoline. I am not sure which. And I shall reason with her, and in that way prevent her from being angry with me. Still one must never be too sure. Time alone can tell.

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OCTOBER 12.—Sometimes as I sit in the twilight thoughts come to me, and I am not

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unhappy, and I don't know why I am sure, but I feel like crying. It is then that I love everybody very much and long to help them and be kind to the sick and poor and weary laden, and sometimes then I feel I could write a poem if I could only find the words to rhyme. I feel sure that Jane Austen and Louisa M. Alcott must have felt this way when they were girls, and sometimes I wonder if I too may not write some day. Perhaps. Who knows?

OCTOBER 13. — Yes, I should like to be a poetess. That is my one ambition now. I have thought it all out and I have made up my mind. I used to think I should like to be a trained nurse or a missionary, but now I know that what I really wanted all the time was to be a poetess. Poetesses are really helpful in their way and it is so beautiful to be able to think great thoughts and make people love you even when they do not know you at all. Many people are fitted by nature to be missionaries and trained nurses, but it is only now and then that a poetess is born. Some might think it is conceited to try to be one, but it is not. One cannot help the thoughts that come.

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OCTOBER 16.—With the money Aunt Miranda sent me I have purchased a new cloak, which I sorely needed, my old blue one being quite worn out. The new one is a soft gray and very pretty, with a rose-colored lining which makes it quite effective when left unbuttoned and the wind blowing. Not that I shall often wear it so, disliking attention in public places, and I do not approve of such things anyhow. *Anne* did not, I am sure. Polly Lowe is to have one like it, only her lining is to be a plaid, but I like mine best. While I was showing it to father who should walk in but Mr. Larry, who seems to have taken a sudden notion to calling here. I thought it strange after his former unexplainable conduct and I took the liberty one day to ask him why. He only laughed and said “Because you’re father’s forgot to be an optimist,” at which I gazed upon him in amazement. He is a very singular man, to say the least, but he was very pleasant about the cloak, and called me a little Quakeress in it. To be sure I did not mind that, for what would Pennsylvania have been without William Penn?

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And “thee” and “thou” are very pretty words to use, I think, and I always did like gray to wear. Mr. Larry can be most affable when he chooses. It is only when he tries to be amusing that he fails to charm.

OCTOBER 17. — I have finished *Persuasion*, the loveliest story I ever read, and I have made up my mind to read it often — once a year at least, I think — in order that I may never forget to be like Anne. It is my favorite book. *Never* have I read such *perfect* English. If I could write like that, it would be bliss. In fact if I do not decide to be a poetess I shall become a novelist, I think, though either would be very satisfactory. Miss Austen had such a quaint old-fashioned way of telling things. On the whole she is quite different from Dickens, or Sir Walter Scott, or E. P. Roe.

OCTOBER 18. — We have had *such* a surprise! To-day at luncheon I noted that father seemed to have something on his mind. Twice, I know, he started to speak of it, but changed his mind, so that I kept wondering what it could be, but refrained from asking. Well, this evening at dinner he was *most* agi-

tated. His eyes kept dancing and three or four times he laughed out loud when nothing had been said. I asked him if he were well. He replied "Yes, why do you ask?" "You seem so excited," said I. "I was only thinking," was his vague answer, so I said no more. Well, after dinner I went as usual for the cribbage board. "Oh, never mind," said he, and laughed boisterously. "I guess we won't play cribbage to-night," he remarked, still laughing as before. "Not play cribbage!" I cried aghast, for we always play cribbage after dinner except on Sunday. "I've got a new game for you," he managed to articulate, and thus the domestic scene went on, for all the world like one from Jane Austen's ready pen,— he in his easy chair before the ruddy fire and the autumn wind roaring in the chimney, and alas! poor me standing speechless with the cribbage board. Whereupon he took from his pocket a little box. "We'll play a new game," he remarked, his eyes glistening. "And what, pray, is that?" I inquired respectfully. "They call it," said he — pausing to examine the name upon the box — "Tiddle-dy-winks," and it proved a

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most ingenious game, indeed, consisting of a receptacle into which one snaps little colored disks with varying success. We were very merry over our new pastime, and thus the hours sped with much felicity till the clock warned us that dawn drew nigh.

OCTOBER 19.—I have altered my name to Katrina Longford Austen June, in memory of my favorite authoress.

OCTOBER 20.—Mr. Larry has taken to coming often, for which I am very glad indeed. Poor daddy! He has only his daughter for companionship, and she is too young and inexperienced, I fear, to be very edifying. I am sure I try to talk always of things that will interest my poor dear father, but as the saying is “the flesh is weak.”

* * * * *

OCTOBER 25.—To-night after school, Elizabeth Wendell, Sara Williams, May Bronson and Polly Lowe and I went out for a walk in the autumn woods and fields. How truly the poet sings:

“The melancholy days have come,
The saddest of the year.”

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In autumn everything we have loved in the happy summertime is dying — our friends the flowers and the green leaves and the blades of grass. How natural it is that we are sad! It was great fun gathering the final golden-rod and daisies, and we walked so fast and there were so many vines tripping us up, and so many fences to climb, and we all fell to laughing and giggling — Polly was so funny tumbling! — that we came home all out of breath, and father said he had never seen my cheeks so red. I don't know when I have laughed so much, I am sure, and I tore my dress on a bramble, for which I am sorry, but there is no use crying over spilled milk, as the saying is. We got simply covered with thistle-down. The woods were gold and crimson and the thrifty squirrels were busy with their winter stores. We brought home gorgeous leaves, especially maple. Oh, Autumn, how sad thou art! Yet a little while and it will be winter with its chilling blasts and we shall be wearing leggings. How strange life is, and wonderful!

* * * * *

OCTOBER 27. — This afternoon our class in

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English had an impromptu old-fashioned spelling match, and to my great joy I was victorious, though perhaps it is the less surprising because I have read so much in the world's best literature. I stood alone for some little time, but at last capitulated, my Waterloo being the word "Epiphany," a most subtle word, for one would think it was spelled with an "F," and it is not. I was sorry to sit down, though after all it was almost an honor to do so, I thought, on a word like that, and not on some simple one like "octogenarian," or "incompatibility," which are long of course, but quite easy if you take them by degrees.

* * * * *

OCTOBER 30.—Father brought Mr. Larry home to-night, to dinner, quite unexpectedly. Naturally I was in a fluster trying to remember how he took his tea, but it seems he never does take it, so I had all my pains for nothing after all. To be sure the beefsteak was very small, but father and I took little pieces (by pre-arrangement) and there was an omelette besides, and Mrs. Langley loaned us sardines. As I said above Mr. Larry declined tea utterly

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at which poor father seemed ill at ease, and inquired what we might offer him. He only laughed and said, "Nothing just now. Later in the evening I'll have a little whisky, if you don't mind, William." Father also tried to laugh, but out of courtesy as I could see, for he grew quite red. Surely Mr. Larry must have known that we are temperance and never keep liquor in the house, but he *pretended* not to, and sure enough, later in the evening he asked quite gravely for a drink, *twice*, though father frowned and even coughed. Through the whole performance I sat quite rigid and did my best to change the subject, without avail. So father rose, and going to the kitchen, returned presently with a bottle of cooking brandy. Strangely enough, Mr. Larry seemed to remember his manners, and attempted to decline, but father was very fierce for father and would not hear of his refusing our hospitality, compelling him to drink a glassful of the fiery stuff. For the life of me I do not see what pleasure men find in alcholic beverages, judging by the faces Mr. Larry made, and I noted that he left a little in his glass. Yet I distinctly overheard him re-

KATRINA'S DIARY

mark to father as he left the house something about "one on me," which I believe is a vulgar expression for asking a man to take a drink. Mr. Larry's conduct is incomprehensible.

OCTOBER 31.—We only play one game of Tiddle-dy-winks now after dinner. Father finds cribbage, he says, more lasting in its effects.

NOVEMBER 1.—Mr. Larry has asked me to go to the park with him on Sunday, and to-night he brought me a box of chocolates. He is not what one terms a handsome man, but at times there is something very attractive about him. How he has remained single so long is a mystery to me. That he needs the refining touch of a woman's hand I do not deny, but even without it he is a man of taste, and of *great* information, father says. Dear father! He always buys me stick candy, forgetting that I am no longer a little child.

NOVEMBER 2.—Oh, these beautiful hazy autumn days! Polly Lowe and I went walking in the park this afternoon and I found a violet growing among the fallen leaves. It has moved me to write these simple lines:

K A T R I N A

THE LAST VIOLET

Oh, violet, dear violet,
Why do you stay so late?
You linger in the wild wood,
Not thinking of your fate.

Oh, violet, dear violet,
The winter's coming soon.
The birds are flying southward,
Cold is the autumn moon.

Oh, violet, dear violet,
I'll take thee to my heart.
You need not fear at all, sweet flow'r,
Immortal there thou art. . .

In case of my early death, which alas! is not uncommon in this vale of tears, if my friends should ever collect my poems for publication, I desire this one to stand first, in the *first* division of the book called "Early Verse." The book itself will be called "Arbutus," unless some other poet has taken that name, which sometimes happens. In that case I should like it called "Lillies of the Valley," my next favorite flower. And I should want my name to be printed in full — Katrina

KATRINA'S DIARY

Longford Austen June. Longford was my mother's name. There is said to be an estate in Ireland belonging to our family, but no one knows where, for the papers have gone astray.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 10.—The older I grow the more I realize that life is not ours to do as we please with. We have a duty to perform. Let us do it with a will.

* * * * *

NOVEMBER 14,—We have given up Tiddley-winks entirely. Father says it does not stand the test of time.

NOVEMBER 27.—My aim is to write in my diary only such things as will be of interest in the years to come. Then, sitting evenings before the ruddy fire, with my little ones about my knee, I shall read aloud to them what their mother did and thought when she too was young. Ah, yes! when she was young! Many a time will she sigh then for the girlhood days, and as she thinks of them the tears of memory will flow, I ween. Ah, well!

XI

QUESTIONS

IT was one of those winter evenings when the snow and moonlight outshine the blaze upon the brightest hearth, that Mr. Larry, leaving his register far behind him, strolled aimlessly through the quiet streets, smoking and communing with himself, till turning corners he was suddenly aware that the professor's house stood just before him. It is a phenomenon frequent enough in single men, that in their evening rambles in a lonely world, however absent their minds may be, however whimsically their thoughts may turn or twist or mount bachelor-wise to a high contempt for the heavy ox-like domesticity of their fellows, their steps — unconsciously enough, no doubt — will trend inevitably to the nearest fireside where a man of family will make them welcome. Thus Mr. Larry, rising from Mrs. Withers's table and asking "What shall I do to-night?" might remind himself that he had been at the June's three times in a fortnight and that to go

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again would be presumption, yet once on his legs, as we have seen — poor pendent, servile creatures though they are — they lead him by devious paths and imperceptible degrees to the very house he has resolved to shun. Strange accident, that the snow and moonlight should be always fairest in this one direction from Mrs. Withers's! And it may well be wondered how Mr. Larry had managed with all those other evenings of other years that now he should find it so passing difficult to avoid the Junes.

Once there, there was no alternative. Mr. Larry went in: he was “just going by,” in fact, had but stopped “a moment to inquire” — and inquired till ten. It was a mild research, one interlocutor stretched out easily in the professor’s chair before one of those “ruddy fires” of Katrina’s diary, the other, the diarist herself, seated near in a small cane rocker with embroidery in her hands. The professor meanwhile was conducting an inquiry of his own in the domain of letters; he was teaching newsboys in an evening school.

“I’m glad you came,” Katrina said. “I have something *very* important to tell you.

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Father thinks he has found just the man to help him with his book — a Mr. Mackintosh. He's a new member of the school-board, and so interested."

"Indeed?" said Mr. Larry. He was becoming used to these forlorn hopes, and he knew Mackintosh. "Your father is quite elated, I suppose."

"Well — yes," Katrina admitted, "but father isn't quite the same any more. Why, he used to be like a boy. He'd come home smiling and full of fun, and say that *this* time he felt it in his bones that they'd take the history; but now —"

Katrina paused.

"Well, he smiles of course — father always smiles — but he's very quiet about it; and to-night when he told me about Mr. Mackintosh, I said to him, 'But father, you don't seem excited at all.' And he said 'Excited? why should I feel excited?' And I said, 'Well, you used to. You used to feel things in your bones, don't you remember?'"

"And what did he say to that?" asked Mr. Larry.

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“He didn’t say anything. He just laughed a little, that was all.”

She was silent a moment.

“Father must have been very happy when he was young.”

“What makes you think so?”

“Well, Aunt Miranda said, before she died, that he wasn’t at all like the other young men that she and mother knew when they were girls. She said that he was *so* enthusiastic that he never used to sit back in a chair at all; but always on the edge of it; and he had the loveliest, the most philosophical way of talking, she said.”

“He must have been a very charming fellow,” Mr. Larry observed.

“Oh, he was,” Katrina assured him. “I should like to have seen father then — sitting on the edge of his chair, and mother so quiet, listening, and all. Now —”

She paused reflectively.

“He sits way back in his chair now.”

“The chair-edge is for youth, my dear,” Mr. Larry said, settling himself more comfortably among the cushions. “Time was when a fence rail was soft enough.”

K A T R I N A

“Did you ever sit on the edge of *your* chair, Mr. Larry?”

“Very likely.”

“And wave your hands? Father used to wave his hands, Aunt Miranda said.”

“Um; well, I don’t remember waving my hands exactly; I may have done so. They were not, however, what you might call well-calculated for aerial performances; though they would have lent weight no doubt to my argument.”

“And father,” said Katrina, “used to quote beautifully. Did you ever quote?”

Mr. Larry considered.

“Upon occasion.”

“Father,” she continued, “was especially fond of poetry. He liked good novels too — standard novels; that is, *some* standard novels; he never could bear one to end unhappily. So he always read the last page first, to see.”

“That was because he was tender-hearted,” Mr. Larry remarked.

“Yes, and because he was so hopeful, Aunt Miranda said. Oh, he had no patience at all with whiney people. He hasn’t now.

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Life is what you make it, father says, and dreams do come true."

"Do they?" Mr. Larry asked.

"Why, yes — of course," Katrina replied, astonished. "Father says so." She was very talkative to-night and there was little need on Mr. Larry's part for anything but the merest acknowledgment of what she prattled, so that by and by, perhaps through drowsiness, due to the pleasant warmth and to the soothing murmurings of that soft young voice, his replies became vague and curious, so strange sometimes that she began to wonder if he spoke them waking or in a dream. She had expressed a hope for an early, a very early spring.

"Ah, yes," was his reply, "but such springs are death to the fruit crop."

She raised her eyes from her embroidery. Fruit crop? Did the man think he was on a farm?

"An early spring?" she inquired audibly.

"Why, yes," was his answer. "An early spring tempts out the buds too soon and the frost nips them."

"Winter in the country," she remarked, "must be dreadfully dreary."

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"Not at all," he replied. "You toast your heels and write then."

"Write?"

"Yes. It's a bully time to write novels."

"Farmers don't write novels."

"They're fools if they don't," remarked Mr. Larry. "They have a fine annual opportunity."

"I never heard of a farmer writing novels," Katrina protested.

"Blackmore was a gardener," he recalled. "He grew pears on a wall. I always wanted to do that: grow pears on a wall summers and write *Lorna Doones* winters."

Katrina smiled.

"Did you really?"

"Sure."

"But I never heard of growing pears on a wall."

"Didn't you? It's not customary in this country, I believe, but they do it elsewhere."

"Why didn't you?" Katrina asked. "I think it would have been lovely."

"So it would," he assented; "but we can't do everything in this world. We have to leave something for Heaven."

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Katrina looked grave. She was not quite certain that it was proper to speak of gardening in Heaven — or worse, of writing novels there — though the picture his words had conjured up to her of pears ripening upon a wall seemed fairly blissful by contrast with the wintry weather out of doors.

“Pears,” she remarked, “are my favorite fruit, next to strawberries.”

“So? I had it in mind to grow them for you, my dear Katrina.”

“For me!”

“For you.”

“But you didn’t know me then.”

“Oh, yes, I did,” was the calm rejoinder.

“But I wasn’t born then — was I?”

“No matter.”

She gazed dumfounded at the profile we have watched before. There was no smile there.

“But it sounds so foolish, Mr. Larry.”

“Truth often does.”

“But how *could* you have known me when I — when I wasn’t?”

“I imagined you.”

“Oh . . . but not really *me!*”

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“You.”

“Just as I am?”

“Just.”

“But,” said the child, “gray eyes and all?”

“Brown hair too.”

“But not my *name!*” she cried triumphantly.

Mr. Larry hesitated.

“Yes, your name.”

“*Katrina June?*”

“Well, no,” he confessed. “But I knew it would be **Katrina**.”

“But not June?”

“No, I didn’t know it would be June.”

Katrina was silent. She had a creepy feeling, and she rather wished that he would smile.

“Oh, Mr. Larry, are you a — medium?”

“Good Lord, no!” cried Mr. Larry.

“Oh, I’m so glad,” the child replied, sighing.

“If you *had* been — ”

She laughed nervously.

“What would you have done?” he asked.

“I should have hidden,” she confessed.

“I’m afraid of mediums.”

“Did you ever see one?”

“No, but I shouldn’t want one rapping around.”

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Katrina shuddered.

"No more would I," quoth Mr. Larry, lighting another cigarette. The match had a cheerful sound, but Katrina did not speak; at least not at once, and only after a long and curious scrutiny of Mr. Larry's face. Then she asked softly:

"Did you use a planchette?"

"No. Why?"

"Why to find out my name."

"Oh, no," he replied. "I just guessed it."

"If you had used a planchette," she told him gravely, "you would have learned my full name, June and all!"

"I didn't know," she said again, "that you liked the country."

"It is rather singular, I believe, in a farmer's son," Mr. Larry replied. "I'm not at all sure I should like it now."

"The pear plan," Katrina began admiringly, but he interrupted her.

"You mustn't take it too seriously, my dear, I spoke figuratively; though I really did have a notion once of taking a cottage in the country and making my living by writing books. It was a young man's nonsense."

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“And why didn’t you?” Katrina inquired.

“Well, it depended on other things, and *they* didn’t come true, so I —”

“I see,” said Katrina, sighing sympathetically. “It all depends in this life, doesn’t it?”

“I believe it does,” Mr. Larry replied.

“I’ve always noticed it,” she went on, adding more cheerfully, “but father says it is never too late to mend.”

“Dear, dear, yes,” Mr. Larry mused. “I think I can hear your father saying that now.”

“You might still do it, you know,” Katrina observed.

“Do what?”

“Grow pears on a wall.”

But he shook his head.

“No,” he said, “I — I have lost my taste for them.”

“Well, any way, you might write a book.”

“That too,” Mr. Larry replied, “means nothing to me now.”

Katrina seemed shocked. Not to want to grow pears on a wall was one thing; but shades of Jane Austen! — not to want to write a book!

“I should think,” she said, slowly and with

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just a touch of reproachfulness in her tones, "that if a person wanted to do something — that is, something very noble, of course — and wanted to do it *very* much, he would always want to do it."

Mr. Larry did not instantly reply, so she shut her lips firmly with an "*I* would."

"Would you?" he inquired.

"Father says one should persevere."

"I know," said Mr. Larry; "but as I intimated before, some things are like candy; you lose your taste for it as you grow older."

"Oh, do you?" she inquired, incredulously.

"I fear," Mr. Larry remarked drily, "that my illustration was not well chosen."

"But to write a novel," Katrina resumed, "I should think that would be different."

"It would seem so," he admitted; "but I assure you that although it is the one dream left to me — the one old dream possible of realization, I mean — this pear-and-novel orchard plan — I haven't the heart for it."

Katrina laid down her embroidery. There was a sudden illumination in her face.

"I know," she said. "It's because you're a bachelor."

Mr. Larry stared.

"Yes," she repeated firmly, "because you're a bachelor. Bachelors so seldom amount to anything."

Mr. Larry looked unutterable things.

"At least," Katrina hastened to explain, "*most* bachelors — seldom do. Mrs. Gaylor says — she's woman's rights, you know — that half the great men are so because of their wives."

Mr. Larry recovered speech.

"A most remarkable statement," said he. "I wonder if it's true."

"Mrs. Gaylor says so."

"Oh, well, in that case," Mr. Larry began resignedly, when Katrina interposed in triumph:

"So you see if you *had* been married, you might have grown the pears and written the novel and — everything."

"True," he replied. "I guess you're right, Katrina."

"I didn't mean, of course," Katrina explained, "that *you* didn't amount to anything, Mr. Larry. What I meant was that if you *had* had a wife, you —"

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It was a struggle but she managed it.

“— you might have amounted to even more than you do — don’t you see?”

“I see.”

“Oh, I have the *greatest* sympathy with bachelors,” she declared.

“You have? Why?”

She hesitated, and her face flushed.

“Well, she explained, “it must be very trying, I think — of course I don’t know, but I should *think* it would be — to be disappointed — in love.”

“And are all bachelors,” Mr. Larry inquired, persons who — who have been disappointed — in love?”

“Why, of course,” she replied. “Else they wouldn’t be bachelors!”

“Really,” he said, “that sounds very plausible.”

“Oh, I thought everybody knew that,” Katrina assured him. “Why suppose mother hadn’t married father: well then, don’t you see? — ”

“When you put it that way,” Mr. Larry began slowly, but did not finish; yet he seemed convinced.

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"And to know," Katrina went on, "that you had made a man *be* a bachelor — well, that's almost as bad as being one, I should think. Oh, I shouldn't like that at all."

"Yet in some instances," Mr. Larry replied, "it is unavoidable, and even advisable, I suppose."

"I couldn't bear it," declared Katrina. "I should feel positively guilty."

"Should you?"

"Oh, yes; it would be dreadful. And not to have taken *you*, Mr. Larry! Fancy!"

Her face was eloquent. He seemed much gratified, but uneasy in his chair.

"You are most sympathetic," he said; "but I never was what you would call a 'ladies' man.'"

"Yet you are kind-hearted," she consoled him; but he shook his head, and so dubiously withal that her whole heart surged to him.

"Oh, I can't understand how *any one* could have had the heart to — not to —"

"Ah, well," Mr. Larry interposed hastily, "in my case it was a little unusual, I fancy. You see when I got to the lady, why — she wasn't there."

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“Where had she gone?”

Mr. Larry shook his head, and rose suddenly as if for departure. But Katrina did not leave her seat.

“Was she light or dark?”

At that Mr. Larry smiled.

“Medium, I should say.”

“Were her eyes greenish?”

“Dear no; they were gray, I believe. But why ‘greenish?’”

“Because you should always be careful if eyes are greenish.”

“They were not greenish.”

“You mustn’t think me curious, Mr. Larry
—”

“Oh, not at all, my dear; not at all.”

“I was just wondering, that was all.”

“Sure,” Mr. Larry remarked, taking up his coat. “The most natural thing in the world, my dear.”

But Katrina still sat, spell-bound, in her chair.

“And her hair,” she asked, “what color was that, Mr. Larry?”

“Like yours,” he said.

Katrina gasped.

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“Why, *that*,” she cried, “was how you knew —”

“How I knew what?”

She hesitated.

“Why — don’t you see? — how you imagined *me*!”

“Still,” she added with a tinge of disappointment in her voice, “that doesn’t explain how you knew what my name would be.”

But she rose suddenly and came toward him with a little cry of delight.

“Oh, Mr. Larry! — was *her* name Katrina?”

“My child,” he said, taking her hands between his own, “Katrina was always — always — my favorite name.”

XII

AN EPILOGUE

IT had been a matter of wonder to McRae how calmly the professor had borne his disappointments, as after each rejection of his precious history, or each refusal to reconsider it, he had laid the red volume in a convenient drawer of his walnut desk, to begin anew in some other quarter of the board, in the office of some newly elected member seeking a cause to champion, less for its own sake than for an opportunity to display his zeal and eloquence in behalf of Progress and Enlightenment. McRae had waited with some apprehensiveness for that hour when the professor's eyes should open to the fond illusion he had cherished; and as time went by and the fame of that dream had grown familiar to men's ears, so that they smiled at it, or scoffed, or feigned more pressing cares at the professor's courteous approach, while the very office boys tittered at the noble-looking little gentleman waiting their summons in the ante-room with his small red volume in his hands,

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McRae's heart swelled with an indignant pity and with admiration for his undaunted friend, He heard now and then stories of an "old gentleman" styled variously "codger," "beggar," even "fool," and had taken some pains to dispel those epithets. Twice or thrice he himself had discovered the historian in those office vigils, and had seen how the shabby, well-brushed suit he wore, which at home matched his old walnut desk so perfectly as scarcely to be noted in the general autumnal tone of things, there by the polished furniture of those petty courts scarcely befitted the ambassador of such shining hopes.

Watching the professor as time went on Mr. Larry wondered sometimes if that steady cheerfulness was as genuine as it appeared to be. That his dream was fading, or could ever fade, it would perhaps be a part of the professor's philosophy to deny; yet if he talked less of it than before and grew more silent on other themes as well, till Katrina complained affectionately of having to repeat her questions, and Mr. Larry declared that her father was growing deaf, still the same smile hovered about the professor's lips as he watched his

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daughter or listened to the drolleries of that “fellow of infinite cigarettes.” Was he still the optimist he had been wont to call himself, Mr. Larry mused, or had that child-like trust in the charity and benevolence of his fellow-creatures given way to a sounder faith which seeks within rather than without, and finding serenity in that fountain of eternal youth men call the soul, cares nothing for earth’s tinsel crowns? Had he found that peace, Mr. Larry wondered, or had a cheerful manner become a habit with him, not to be altered by the world’s indifference or contempt? Or was it Pride that kept him loyal to an old ideal, even when Time had all but shattered every fond remaining hope of it? — Pride which denied what its very eyes beheld, which refused utterly to own itself mistaken, or admit defeat?

With the professor’s growing silence and absent-mindedness there was that in his face sometimes, despite its smiling, which bespoke resignation rather than content, though he said nothing of abandoned plans. Nor did McRae question him, or ever refer either to the history or the prospects of its usefulness, feeling in its author’s reticence a hint of a desire

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to be alone with it and with that precious past to which the dream of it belonged. In conversation the professor carefully avoided argument, so that his friend's philosophy, disgruntled or whimsical though it sometimes was, passed unchallenged save by Katrina's grave reproachfulness or wondering smiles.

Without Katrina the editor's calls might have been dull indeed. There was no subject, however erudite, that did not require the counsel of her dear young mind for its solution, for Katrina was in Latin now, and French, and Algebra — a slender school girl, so fresh and lovely in that sweet gravity which had aroused her father's qualms, that merely to hear her pronounce her upright judgments on an erring world, Mr. Larry declared, would shame the Shylock in any man. Portia, he called her, and the two men listened to her tender eloquence with a seriousness not altogether feigned, they were so charmed and proud. Their joy in her was sufficient ground for their continued friendship, even if her love for them had not bound them by another tie. One she admired, as only schoolgirls can admire: is it not heroic to be an editor and

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address a world? The other she loved, though not for his world, keeping her faith in him and in his hopes as loyally as the other Katrina had done before her. That men could fail to observe what a gentle heart he had, or neglect to honor it, seemed passing strange to her; that they could examine that beautiful book which he had written and not be moved by its grace and eloquence was quite inexplicable, although she knew vaguely that there were wicked, odious men down town — fat and red-faced, she sometimes fancied them, in her maiden abhorrence of all mere grossness and because that would least resemble the men she loved — sports and tavern-keepers, doubtless such men would be, gambling and drinking men, and Heaven knows whom beside in shadowy pursuits, scoffing at God, taking His name in vain and loving not brethren who kept His law. Such in her innocence she imagined were her father's enemies, till all mere burliness, all short, thick neckedness, and tendency to what Mr. Larry called heavy digestiveness, aroused suspicion in her tender soul.

That “human circle” to which Katrina had

referred so tenderly in her diary was not only still unbroken, as she had said, but was larger now since Mr. Larry had become a segment; and with his frequent presence, evenings and Sundays, some of the household's older customs passed away. That harmless after-dinner pastime, for example, which even the joys of Tiddle-dy-winks could not displace, had now been relegated to those other days when father and daughter had passed their evenings alone together; that magic-lantern no longer tutored her in antique art; she and her father no longer went hand in hand to see Mr. Joffett and his mummies. Katrina had her high school friends, and there were birthday parties for recreation, and of a Sunday evening, meetings for praise and prayer to lead her thoughts not only heavenward but into heathen wilds, and to make her feel sometimes that after all to be a missionary would be far more satisfying to an earnest soul like hers than to be an Austin. But home again with *Persuasion* in her hand, watching with Anne "the flowing of the tide," she would be more doubtful. To be a Jane Austen and write what would move girls so — even a girl

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who felt some inclination to be a missionary! — was not that a worthy, even an exalted cause? Indeed, might she not do more good in the world as a famous authoress than as a teacher of chocolate-colored Sabbath schools? — and where there were snakes and spiders crawling around? It was a hard question, one that most girls must face sooner or later, and quite alone, since older counsellors, maids as well as lads discover, are prone to view life in a gray twilight and with little sight left for morn's rosy hopes. Perhaps a mother might have listened helpfully, Katrina thought. Had he smiled less indulgently, and a little more warmly, upon her tentative girlish confidences, Professor June might have heard more — more than he dreamed of — of what lay nearest his daughter's soul. What was he busy with that he scarcely seemed to hear at all? Even when he gazed most fondly upon her eager face, or stroked her hair, while she prattled on to him of school or housework or the books she read, or the friends she was making, his mind was elsewhere. Had he not had a lifetime for his own high hopes and plans that he could not listen to another's now? —

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that other his flesh and blood, and that other's dreams mist of his mists, and no less rosy than his own had risen in his morning's sun. Or was he busy with that morning still? Were its vapors lovely to look back upon? Are memories but inverted dreams?

It was to her diary that Katrina turned for that confessional which youth must have, and to Betty Wendell, her bosom friend, and to Mr. Larry, whose youth, he said, still tagged him sometimes, despite gray hairs. It was from the editor that the professor first learned of the missionary dream, and of its struggle with that *Persuasion* of another sort which Mr. Larry vowed was bound to win—"not through any lack of saintliness on Katrina's part, but because that Austen woman is so darned human," as he averred. Whether the professor felt any pang that Katrina had chosen another confidant, only a father who has seen his child's heart through another's eyes can say. That he was even aware of her slight defection, or that being so he would have thought it significant or strange, or himself in any wise responsible, is a doubtful question. He merely smiled.

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The fears which Katrina's gravity had once aroused in Professor June, and which brought Mr. Larry to that midnight rescue, had passed utterly, partly through their own groundlessness, partly because the editor had come to share in no trivial measure that responsibility which the father in a sudden panic-stricken vision of its significance, had trembled to bear alone. From that hour when the bachelor discovered Katrina in her scarlet slumber robe, he had watched her gravely as a second father, smiling to himself — but only to himself — at her fair, ingenuous outlook upon a world which he saw so differently; and so, and not without aid from that very contrast, coming to love her almost as his very own. And she *was* his own, he used to declare to her, to see her blush — by what he called "step-heredity," pointing out to her how undeniable it was that she had inherited (from whom but him?) that inconspicuous but significant little mole, a mere brown dot upon her nose! It was indisputable as he had said: the moles were there, one his, one hers, and identical as all the world could see. With such absurdities did Mr. Larry give Katrina

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a daughter's portion of his whimsical but tender sympathy, and so naturally, so imperceptibly was this younger fatherhood established, so contentedly did the professor observe Katrina growing in grace and fairness to be like her mother, so quietly, so smilingly did he then withdraw to a kind of benevolent grandfatherly acquiescence in that sturdier youth-like comradeship between his daughter and his friend, that she never realized, nor did he apparently, that with her childhood more than mere cribbage-games had passed away.

Like old men smoking at their children's hearths, or dozing by kitchen doorways in the sun, the professor gradually effaced himself, becoming as it were a silent partner in those cheerful enterprises of Katrina's youth. Mr. Larry too was an oldish fellow now, but in experience, not in heart, and was growing young again. And the *Herald* grew younger! — in that inner corner called "Cap and Bells." A maid appeared there, a child named Delia, demure and innocent, who spoke sweet lines. Were Mr. Larry in a melting mood some morning, did he turn poet, or had his humor a something in it too tender for a clown to say,

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it was Delia speaking — as “Delia says,” or thus and so “observed my Delia,” or “Delia’s eyes brightened as she told me.” Sometimes she was “the girl, Delia,” or “the fair Delia,” or “that child, Delia;” or, if the jester would mock a little at the bloom on those words which he made her say, as if ashamed of them even in hiding, he would call her “that silly young thing named Delia;” and the very next morning, doubtless, coax and wheedle her with “sweet Delia, without whom there’d be no music in these tinkling bells.”

Her sayings were copied far and wide. The *Sun* had them; *Life* gave a corner to “Cousin Delia.”

“I see,” wrote the Old Subscriber to the *Herald*, “you have revived Cordelia, whose charming sayings I remember smiling at years ago in your ‘Cap and Bells.’ But now, I notice you call her Delia. I wonder, can she be the same? Cordelia, surely, is a girl no longer. Perhaps this Delia is a daughter of our former friend. If so, here’s health to her, for she’s like her mother to a T.”

“I turned to Delia,” the jester reported in “Cap and Bells.” “‘What is youth, my

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child?' 'Youth?' she inquired, smiling confidently. 'Why, youth is being young, isn't it?' 'Silly Delia!' said I. 'We all know that. But what *is* youth?' Delia looked grave. 'Well,' she replied, 'it's having something to look forward to, I suppose, sir.' Then I gazed at those full-blown cheeks, and those eyes fixed wonderingly upon my whitening hair. Oh, wise *young* Delia!"

Had the optimist nothing to look forward to that he was forgetting to be young? So many optimists grow old, and for so many reasons, it is hard to say. To Mr. Larry with his eyes on Katrina it seemed preposterous that a father should ever age, though afterwards in "Cap and Bells" we find him reflecting that "all the young blossoms God stars the world with are insufficient to lure men's eyes from the withered flowers of their own lost May."

However difficult bad men find it to be forgotten, however surely their crimes clap shackles on their hands at last, though they flee to the very fox-holes of the earth for refuge, that self-effacement which they seek in vain, for good men is an easier matter. Silence with no demands upon a busy world, soon

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lets them out of it, and so imperceptibly that death itself is a graceful thing. Professor June knocking at men's doors with his red history in his hands was of their world; successful or not, he and his dream were part and parcel of their lives, and he was in their memories: "Old June called again to-day." But Professor June, seated silently beside his hearth with his dream relinquished, with its scarlet symbol locked in his old brown desk, was a man of yesterday before Death came to proclaim him so. He was of Katrina's childhood rather than her youth, so that her memories of him are mostly of his cribbage-playing days when he still had something to look forward to.

To Katrina he left those walls where the morning-glories clung, and within them those few possessions which had come to him mostly with her mother. To Mr. Larry he left Katrina.

In an old scrap-book, which he had kept diligently in his early years, they found on its inner cover a kind of motto for the story of his life. It was written in his youth, before his marriage — a challenge to the future —

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glove of a dreamer hurled valorously in the face of Time:

“*They sing of Youth,*” he wrote in his school-boy hand “—poets, philosophers, kings and peasants all sigh for it when it is gone. *I shall not sigh.* *I shall rejoice in that wider vision which comes only to man matured.* *The child sees but the grass-blades that he seizes in his hand.* *The youth sees farther, but only to the brook beyond.* *For man’s eyes only does the landscape spread itself in its full glory — does life stretch out into boundless vistas to that far horizon where it fades into the mists beyond.* *Why, then, do men sigh for youth’s petty vision?* *No, give me manhood on its heights!* *Let me feast my eyes on God’s wonder-world!* *Life will be happier then, and I shall be younger in its twilight than in its dawn.*”

PART II

I

AGAINST THE MORROW

“**M**Y dear,” said Mr. Larry, taking the young Katrina’s hands and pressing them gently between his own, “what is your plan?”

She cast down her eyes, and when she raised them again, he could see how doubtful she was of his approval and how difficult it would be to speak, so he turned his back upon her, fumbling with a cigarette to give her time, and when even then she remained silent he began to walk, slowly, up and down the study, with his eyes upon the ceiling, upon the curtains, the books, the carpet, the clouds of tobacco smoke which he blew industriously—anywhere, in short, save on Katrina, that she might compose herself. Presently he said cheerfully, “I once had a notion of being a parson. Would you believe it?” The bare absurdity of Mr. Larry in the pulpit gave her courage to begin. Her own little plan, whatever it was, now

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seemed more reasonable, more talkable at least.

"Well," she began, "I'm not quite old enough, or experienced enough, to teach."

She paused.

"And I can't very well be a — missionary, for I don't think it's right to be one, just to earn your living."

"Certainly not," observed Mr. Larry, promptly. He had no intention, he told himself, as Katrina's guardian, of permitting the child to become a missionary. Christianity, he chose to believe, at least in this instance, should begin at home. *He* was heathen enough.

"And beside," Katrina remarked, "I haven't been called."

"That was my trouble," said Mr. Larry, "in the ministry matter. I listened long enough, but I didn't hear anything. So I came away."

"And somehow," Katrina went on, "I don't incline very much to dressmaking."

"Nor I," he replied.

"Or millinery either," she added.

"Heavens, no, my child."

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“Well, you see,” she explained, “it’s quite out of the question on account of my —”

“I know: your scruples,” said Mr. Larry. “A member of the Audubon Society would find millinery mighty poor picking.”

“What an odd expression!” she observed.

“Odd? It’s common enough.”

“I never heard it. It sounds so bony — like the poor little birds.”

“That’s why I used it,” he explained. “No, I shouldn’t advise you to take up millinery under the circumstances. What *can* you do?”

Her eyes lighted, but she dropped them instantly.

“Well, she replied, “I can make gingerbread,” adding quickly, “you say so yourself.”

“I do, indeed,” Mr. Larry assured her. “The best gingerbread I ever tasted. I make no exceptions. Mother made corking pies, but her gingerbread — oh, it was scrumptious, you understand, but it lacked — how shall I say it? — it hadn’t the *poetry* of your gingerbread. That’s it. It didn’t *sing*, my dear.”

“I thought of poetry too,” Katrina confessed shyly, “but I — ”

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“You thought of poetry?” Mr. Larry repeated, cautiously. “You mean —”

“Yes, as a plan,” she answered.

“Capital!” he cried. “I don’t know of a better investment, if you can only find somebody to—pay your expenses.” He considered a moment. “But as an income,” he resumed slowly, “that is, as a *steady* income —”

He shook his head.

“Don’t think of it,” my love, he added earnestly in a lowered voice, gazing dreamily at his cigarette. “Why, I knew a poet once. He was of the old school, too — that is, he wrote real poetry, you understand, not simply verse. Oh, he wrote beautifully upon occasion. I remember one, especially. No, I remember two, now that I come to think of it; and that, you know, is remembering a good deal of a modern poet.”

Mr. Larry reflected.

“Once in December, I recollect, his publisher sent him a batch of royalties, for the year — a check.” Here Mr. Larry’s voice deepened dramatically. “Two dollars and ninety-eight cents; with best wishes for a Happy New Year.”

Mr. Larry smiled.

“Gingerbread’s safer, my love.”

“That’s what I thought,” said Katrina meekly.

“Do you intend to live *on* it, or *by* it?” Mr. Larry inquired. “What’s your idea?”

Katrina, her eyes upon her fingers, and her fingers rolling her handkerchief into a little firm ball, took a long, deep breath.

“Well,” she explained, “now I thought this: *I* thought — *having* the house, you know — and needing to do *something* to make my living — that *I* — that is, *I* — well — might open a shop, you know — just a *little* shop — in the p-parlor.”

Mr. Larry did not turn a hair.

“In *Cranford*, you know,” Katrina hastened to add, “they opened just a little shop; and if Miss Mattie could, why couldn’t *I*? Sell gingerbread, *I* mean, and say, currant-buns, and fudges for the school children.”

Mr. Larry blew a long and very helpful cloud, and cleared his throat.

“Well, now,” said he, “that does sound promising.”

He nodded thoughtfully.

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"It would muss up the house a little," he ventured; "but I daresay that could be arranged."

"Oh, yes," cried Katrina, "I had thought of that. I would shut off the parlor, you understand — make it a regular little shop, you know, with a counter, and a sign in the window, and shelves, and wrapping-paper and all — oh, as neat as wax! I'm sure the neighbors would all buy of me. There's Mrs. Greene, and Mrs. Bellows, and Mrs. Robkin, and Mrs. Bowles, and Mrs. Bennington — yes, and Mrs. Clarke — and Miss Whitney too."

"Still," Mr. Larry interposed, "you could scarcely expect them to eat gingerbread every day."

"Oh, Mr. Robkin is *passionately* fond of it," Katrina answered. "He told me so."

Mr. Larry mused.

"Perhaps you're right," he said. "I know Robkin. There are other things he takes pretty regularly."

"He just *loves* gingerbread," Katrina repeated. "I know."

"And what do you estimate Mr. Rob-

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kin's capacity to be — per day?" Mr. Larry inquired.

"And there are the buns, too," Katrina ran on, unheeding; "and the fudges."

"That's true," he assented.

"Currant-buns," she explained.

"Yes, I know," he assured her, swallowing. "I know those buns. You'll sell them hot, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes," she replied; "that is, hot for luncheon — hot every noon."

He shook his head.

"Can't you make it mornings — hot for breakfast? I can't possibly get home noons."

Katrina smiled happily.

"They'll be hot for you, always," she assured him.

"Then it's a charming plan," he cried, "charming, my dear. The more I think of it, the better I like it. But have you figured out what your profits would be?"

"Well," she replied, "I thought if I could make, say, a dollar a day — clear — six dollars a week, you see, leaving out Sunday — it would be nice."

"Very," he said. "And how many ginger-

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breads would you have to sell to make a dollar a day?"

"Oh, I haven't quite figured that out yet," she explained. "That, of course, would all depend."

"True," he assented, "it would all depend."

"But I ought to get ten cents a loaf," Katrina argued. "So, you see, ten loaves at ten cents apiece, would be a dollar a day."

"True, my love," he replied cautiously — treading gently lest he break that dream — "but there would be the little item of — of expenditure, you know — the cost of the ginger, and the flour and the — eggs, I take it — to be subtracted."

"Oh, of course, I should always do that," she assured him.

"As I understand you," he remarked, "you want to *clear* one dollar, every day."

"Yes, that's it; *clear* one dollar," she replied; "that is, over and above expenses, of course."

"Good," said Mr. Larry. "Well, then, it will first be necessary to figure the cost of making and selling a loaf of gingerbread; and then, don't you see, you —"

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“Oh, yes,” Katrina assured him, “I knew we should have to do something like that, of course, but I forgot. Oh!—and I forgot Mrs. Vale too. She *loves* gingerbread.”

Mr. Larry abandoned all questions of expense.

“I don’t disapprove of the plan, at all,” he said. As I say, it’s a lovely idea.”

“That’s what *I* think,” Katrina declared. “I thought of all the other plans too, but they seemed so —”

“Oh, I know,” Mr. Larry interposed. “They seemed so commonplace.”

“Except the poetry,” Katrina replied. Mr. Larry nodded.

“Except the poetry, of course. Now I can understand,” he continued, “I can understand perfectly that just to *make* gingerbread, just to be around where it is *being* made, just to smell it, and snuff it, and break off a nice, hot crusty little corner, now and then—”

“Oh, you couldn’t do that,” Katrina objected.

“You couldn’t?”

“Why, no. They would never buy gingerbread that had been nibbled.”

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"Oh, I don't mean nibbled," he explained.
"Not nibbled, of course. But you always
have to taste it, don't you, to see if it's good?"

"Not taste it — *test* it," she corrected him,
"with a straw."

"A straw?" he repeated. "Why, when
mother made gingerbread, I never used a
straw."

Katrina smiled.

"It's not so necessary to be careful," she
admitted, "at home."

"Isn't this to be home-made gingerbread?"
he urged.

"You'd never make a baker," was her
answer.

"Still," he protested, "I should want to be
awfully careful, if I were you, not to be selling
sad gingerbread, for if Mr. Robkin once got
a loaf that was not all it should be —"

She smiled reproachfully.

"Did I ever bake you sad gingerbread, Mr.
Larry?"

"Never," he confessed. "That one you
made yesterday: it was frankincense and
myrrh, my love. And while we're on the sub-
ject — before I forget it — you don't happen

to have any of that same in the buttery, do you?"

She laughed delightedly and went and brought him some, and the longer he munched it, the rosier her vision grew. Mr. Larry too waxed eloquent—that is, as eloquent as the gingerbread permitted.

"Ash I shay," he concluded, "thish idea appealsh to me won'erfly. Think I should even be willing to — to buy up your — remainin' shtock — myshelf — ev'ry night — for my own particular purposhes. Catch my idea? — I really think — I could dishposh of what wash left. Eh, m' dear?"

But she smiled now through a sudden tearfulness.

"You are always *so* kind, Mr. Larry. I believe you would buy my whole stock, buns and all."

He eyed her gravely.

"That wouldn't be kindnesh, m'love," he mumbled with his final mouthful. "That'd be — dyshpepshia."

"No," he added, wiping the crumbs away, "we won't reject *Cranford*; not just yet; not to-night, at any rate."

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He rose and paced up and down the study, between her chair and the window.

“No,” he repeated, lighting his cigarette, “whatever else we do, Katrina, we’ll keep it in mind as one of those dreams that make life lovely. It’s your pears-on-a-wall, in other words, my child. It’s better, perhaps, to keep some dreams unrealized; then their bloom remains — it rubs off, somehow, in the handling.”

He paused a moment, adding gravely,

“You might make a gingerbread now and then, for yourself and me — say, once a week — or even oftener, if you like — as a kind of symbol, to remind us. Meanwhile —”

He stopped by the desk and fumbled idly with the papers there.

“Meanwhile,” he said, in a lower, more embarrassed tone, “you must remember that I never had a daughter, and this is such a — such a splendid chance for me, that I should like you to go on with school and everything, I think, just as before. I’ll pay expenses. This is your home, you know, your house, your furniture, and if I am to live here, you must have some — compensation, you understand.”

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“Compensation!” Katrina gasped, “Oh, Mr. Larry, I —”

“Oh, well,” he broke in earnestly, “we’ll fix all that. But don’t you worry. Don’t you worry about the future, Katrina. Why, you don’t know — you can’t — what it means to me to have the —”

He laughed, blushing like a schoolboy.

“— the privilege of your acquaintance, my dear,” he finished awkwardly, and it was fortunate just then that by some mistake he thrust the lighted end of his cigarette into his mouth, and forgot embarrassment.

“We’ll have Mrs. Jerrold remain, I think,” he resumed presently, “to do the housework. We shall want a piano.”

“I’d rather have a dulcimer,” Katrina told him.

“Would you?” he asked, smiling gratefully. “What *is* a dulcimer? I’m blest if I know.”

“I believe,” she replied, “it’s a kind of harp.”

“There’s a poem about it,” said Mr. Larry. “It goes like this —

It was an Abyssinian maid
And on her dulcimer she played.

“That’s all I know of it. And that’s all I

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know about the dulcimer. Still, we might get one, I suppose."

"It would be nice, don't you think?" Katrina answered. "That is — if it doesn't cost too much. But in that case we might get a very little one."

"True," he replied, taking out his notebook. "I'll inquire to-morrow."

"Dulcimer," he said, jotting it down. "And there was something else you told me to get. What was it?"

"Oh, thread," she replied.

"No, I've got that down. White No. 80."

"Brass-headed tacks."

"No, I've got them too."

Then they both pondered, gazing thoughtfully at each other's face.

"Cream cheese!" they shouted with one breath. "That's it."

"Dairy products are very scarce," he remarked casually. "I see that butter's thirty-two cents a pound."

"By the way," he added, closing his memorandum, "I don't know whether you've heard or not, but there's going to be a fire-sale of canned goods at Watson's to-morrow."

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He paused suspiciously, though there was not the slightest reason in the world, in Katrina's face.

"Yes?" she said, much interested.

"Everything five cents a can," he continued, still marking her with the corner of his eye.

"At Watson's," she repeated. Mr. Larry nodded.

"You — you don't happen to need a — an ice-cream freezer, do you?" he inquired cautiously. "They're marked way down at James's. You can get a genuine Pike's Peak centrifugal —"

Again he paused, not yet quite certain how she would take it, but she still seemed serious enough.

"Well," she replied gently, "we've got *one*, you know."

"Oh, well in that case," he remarked indifferently, though still regarding her with some disquiet, "we shan't need another."

"It was good of you to notice," she said gratefully.

"No trouble at all," he responded, more reassured — quite reassured, in fact, for his

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old ardor suddenly came back again. "By George! I forgot."

"What?" she inquired.

He made no reply but strode to the hallway and fumbled for a moment in the pocket of his coat, extracting an odd-looking package which he untied as he slowly returned to her, and beaming like a child he laid its contents in her lap.

"There!" he cried. "There, my dear, is a thing no housewife should be without. It's strange that women don't buy them oftener."

Katrina took it up curiously, turning it from side to side.

"Why, isn't it lovely?" she said.

"Isn't it!" he responded.

"Yes," said Katrina. "Why! it's a pepper-shaker! Isn't it?"

"Oh, no," he replied. "That isn't a pepper-shaker."

"Why, isn't that pepper in there?"

"No. Sand."

"Sand! Then it must be an hour glass."

"No," he explained, "it's more of a minute glass. That's to time eggs with."

"To time —"

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“Why, yes. Say you’re boiling eggs three minutes. Well—when the sand runs to there, your egg is done!”

“Of course!” cried Katrina, her face glowing. “So you don’t need the clock at all!”

“The clock!”

Mr. Larry grinned foolishly.

“By George,” he said, “I—I forgot the clock,” and burst out laughing. “I am a—”

“Still,” said Katrina, “ours *does* lose time dreadfully,” at which Mr. Larry only laughed the more.

“It does, really,” she persisted. “Besides, one might have a maid who couldn’t tell time. And this is so simple.”

He was still chuckling.

“I am a—”

“Stop!” she commanded. “You can make fun of me, but not of yourself, Mr. Larry. It’s a dear, so it is. I shall try it in the morning.”

She rose.

“How do you like them?—your eggs, I mean.”

“Some people have very queer notions of boiling eggs,” he replied. “An egg boiled less,

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or longer, than just three minutes, is so much leather to digest. I had the hardest time teaching Mrs. Withers that."

"I'll do my best, Mr. Larry. I may not please you always, you know, but I—"

Her eyes looked misty.

"Oh, my dear," he cried, "it doesn't really matter in the least you know. A few minutes more, or less, won't make any difference, I assure you. Why, I've eaten two-minute eggs — yes, and four, and even five-minute eggs, and not suffered — at least not greatly."

"Will you lock the front door?" she inquired timidly.

"Yes, and I'll try all the windows too," he said. "Don't worry. Oh, I say: do you put a pail out for the milk, or anything?"

"It comes in bottles."

"By George, Katrina, did you know this window-catch was broken?"

"Oh, yes — it's been that way for years," she replied.

"But, my dear," he protested, "this will never do! This isn't safe, you know. Why, a burglar could get in without the slightest annoyance. Are you sure the cellar's all right?"

“Mrs. Jerrold sees to that.”

“Has Mrs. Jerrold an alarm clock?” he inquired.

“Oh, yes.”

“Not,” he added, “that it makes any difference — when we have the egg-timer.”

He locked the last window.

“Is that all, do you think?”

“Yes,” she replied, gazing thoughtfully at the heightened color in his face. “I’m afraid, Mr. Larry, you will find housekeeping a *great* deal of trouble and responsibility. You take it so seriously.”

“Oh, I rather like it,” he replied cheerfully.

“You do know,” she said, “that I am very, *very* grateful for all your kindness, Mr. Larry?”

She stood before him with her face all earnestness and his gift clasped to the bosom of her little black gown.

“I do, dear child,” was his reply. “You mustn’t thank me. It is a great pleasure — this is all so new to me,” he explained gazing about him, and then as his glance fell upon his ward again, he added — “so new and charming, my dear.”

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“Good night,” she said.

“Good night, Katrina.”

He raised her hand according to his custom,
but it held the egg-timer — so he kissed her
brow.

II

BILLY WHITE

MR. LARRY, sitting at his desk one afternoon, with his eyes fixed dreamily upon the Champagne Soap sign opposite his window, and his mind on the Savings Bank Tax, heard his name emerge from the hum of voices and the click of the typewriters, and became gradually aware of its repetition, accompanied by the unmistakable sound of chuckling. There was a loud guffaw as he turned his head.

“How about that? Eh, Mac?”

He glanced inquiringly at the beaming faces of his associates, and with especial interest at the central figure and evident promoter of their good-humor, Billy White, the sporting editor of the *Herald*, who had sauntered in from his desk in the news-room and was perched now on that of the dramatic-man, with a tell-tale smirk on his blonde young face. A recent graduate from the gridiron of his university, and of a pleasant record there

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as a youngster of parts — four parts, it was said: bones, blood, banjos and beer — this stout young rowdy had become a journalist with the avowed intention of seeing Life. Just now, in his role of picador, with his bare arms folded, with the light of glee upon his countenance heightened by the smudge of soft pencil lead upon his nose, and his short, brown rumpled hair rising from behind in one quizzical, brush-defying tuft, he was a model of cheerful and irrepressible impudence, and shirt-sleeved youth.

“How about that, Mac? Teaching kindergarten, I hear. Eh?”

“You go to the devil,” was Mr. Larry’s amiable reply.

White rocked with joy.

“Rumor’s around that you cut out paper-things, and play ring-around-the-rosy. And I understand you make the kids ante before they get any supper. Is that true?”

Mr. Larry’s reply was lost in the general hilarity which died away only to burst out again at mirthful intervals.

“Let’s see,” Billy White resumed, counting on his fingers, “how old *is* little Phœbe now?

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I know she was eighteen months when she had the measles."

His face fell at the recollection, and he shook his head.

"Sure thought we'd lose our darling then," he said mournfully, adding in a brisker tone, "by the way, Mac, I'm coming to call some evening, along about vesper bells. You know: 'Now I lay me.' Oh, I'm something of a dandler myself. Hell, yes, you ought to see me do Banbury Cross. Great!"

He smiled simpering at Mr. Larry.

"Oh, yes," he drawled in a languid, soprano voice, "little Phœbe'll like me. All the girls do."

Mr. Larry rose.

"Excuse me," he said calmly, overlooking White, and smiling at the doorway, "while I introduce to you humorous gentlemen — little Phœbe herself."

White, scrambling to his feet, flushed to the ears when he saw a girl upon the threshold. She must have heard him, he reflected, for she seemed dismayed, and about to retreat.

"Katrina," Mr. Larry said, advancing and taking her by the hand, "let me present to you my young friend, Willy White."

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Mr. White, crimson now and shuffling uneasily, ducked his head.

“How-d'y-do. Oh, yes, I've — I've heard of you, Miss —”

“June, Willy,” Mr. Larry said in a kindly, patronizing voice.

“Yes, I've heard of you, Miss June.”

“Willy,” Mr. Larry continued, addressing Katrina, and speaking with a fond emphasis on his friend's name, “Willy has been laboring under the impression that you were younger. Quite an infant, in fact.”

“Y-es,” Mr. White admitted sheepishly, “I was just saying — we were just saying — in fact, I was just saying —”

“Willy,” Mr. Larry explained calmly, “is the sporting editor of the *Herald*. He reports all the man-fights, cock-fights, dog-fights —”

“Oh, how dreadful!” exclaimed Katrina. “But of course,” she added, “they'll give you nicer assignments by and by, Mr. White.”

There was a titter at that, quickly suppressed.

“Willy,” Mr. Larry continued, still speaking with grave distinctness, and in a voice that could be heard plainly in every corner of the

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room, “*Willy*, as you have doubtless already guessed, Katrina, is a rising young man, and may, in time, attain to almost anything.”

Mr. White laughed.

“Ha, ha! I guess you know Mac,” he said nervously to Katrina, and, with a desperate endeavor to appear at ease, “I guess you know Mac, Miss June. He’s a merry old soul, isn’t he? Ha, ha!”

“Now, *Willy!*” Mr. Larry protested playfully, shaking his finger at the unhappy young man. “*Willy*,” he confided to Katrina in a lower voice, “is a fellow of infinite jest, my dear. Yes.”

“Ha, ha!” said Mr. White, displaying some signs of an early departure.

“Oh, must you?” Mr. Larry asked, “must you go, *Willy*? ”

But Billy White was his own man now. He had recovered — if not his composure, at least a dignity that would serve as well. It was a sudden straightening of the spine that made one forget the smudge upon his nose.

“You’ll excuse me, Miss June,” he said politely, ignoring Mr. Larry. “The fact is I’ve got an engagement. Happy to

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have met you. I'll bid you good-day, Miss June."

"*Nice boy,*" Mr. Larry murmured ere the vanishing youth was out of hearing, and then, with a nod and smile at the wrathful face turned suddenly in the doorway, he took Katrina by the hand and proudly presented her to his fellow editors, who in the midst of their joy over White's discomfiture, had been regarding her furtively with curious and admiring eyes. It was a trying ordeal for the young schoolgirl, though not less difficult for the shirt-sleeved gentlemen of the press, who vied with each other in awkward courtesy, and spoke so fondly of her Mr. Larry that she emerged from their greetings fairer than ever with her flushed cheeks and her brightened eyes.

This, then, was the child Mr. Larry had taken to raise! This was the reason he was seen no more in those quiet little evening games where his old antagonists found consolation for his absence in a biting wit at his expense. This was the mysterious maiden with whom he had been seen on a recent Sunday walking sedately in the park, and beside

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whom even the Press Club's beefsteak dinner had no further charms!

"*Pretty excuse!*" some one remarked when she had gone, but the ambiguity was not deceptive. All doubts were at an end, now that they had seen her. Her beauty had explained all things; it made all things reasonable. They knew now why a certain old coat and antiquated hat had disappeared — familiar servitors without whom their bachelor friend had seemed transformed. They knew, too, why his hair inclined to unwonted trimness; why his linen now was an eternal white; why of a Sunday he wore a frock coat — that seven days' wonder which had dazzled their informant's eyes.

"Some one was with him," this informant had said, "but it took so blamed long to be sure it was *Mac* there, I never got 'round to make out his lady, until she'd passed. All I can swear to was *Mac* in a long-tailed, ulsterish kind of a thing, with a little blue blur upon his arm."

This, then, was the little blue blur!

And it was the little blue blur that Billy White saw again, cooling his wrath in the

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Vale of Cashmere, a lovely spot, where the park deepens and there is rhododendron and a water-lily pond.

“I looked up,” said he, “and there was Mac, damn him — it’s your deal, Joyce. — Mac piking along with his head in the clouds, and a far-away, dreamy look in his eyes. Ever seen Mac walk? No, I’m hanged if you have — unless it’s lately. They didn’t see me. I ducked in an arbor. And he called her *dearie* as they passed! If there’s a word I hate, it’s that damned word ‘dearie,’ And what right has a man to have a nice little innocent thing hanging on his arm, and looking up to him as if he were the Angel Gabriel — instead of the miserable, poker-playing reprobate *we* know he is? Hey, Joyce? I pass.”

III

ALADDIN

THE dulcimer proving on careful investigation to be more or less impracticable, as Mr. Larry informed Katrina, a pianoforte was chosen in its stead. He confessed to a grievous disappointment, having had some notion, it appeared, of realizing that smuggler's den — sliding-panel, Captain Kidd's pistol, Portuguese chest and all — and Katrina was put to some pains to comfort him.

"After all," she reminded him with the most cheerful of faces, "the fact remains that I am not an Abyssinian maid."

"Very true," he replied, but added bitterly, "music-store clerks are the blamedest fools."

"Did they smile?" she inquired.

"They smiled."

"Smiled at my dear Mr. Larry!" she cried indignantly.

"They did."

"And what did *you* do?" she asked.

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“I bit them,” he replied calmly. “I drove them out of the yard.”

“Oh, I should like to have been there,” she exclaimed, laughing. “But really, you mustn’t mind. The piano is much more sensible, I am sure, and I shall play for you evenings, and you’ll forget Abyssinia.”

“I thought we would call the place the Smugglery,” he continued gloomily, “and the sliding-panel would lead to the garden there.”

“That would have been charming,” Katrina confessed; “but you would have had some trouble, I think, finding a pistol that was Captain Kidd’s.”

“Doubtless,” he assented; “but we could have dispensed with the affidavit. I should have sent to Lisbon for the chest.”

“Never mind,” she replied. “You know what you told me about my gingerbread dream.”

“Something philosophical, I suppose,” he muttered. “I’ve forgotten what.”

Katrina smiled.

“That’s the way, isn’t it,” she remarked. “with other people’s dreams. But don’t be discouraged, Mr. Larry,” she went on earn-

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estly, happy at least, woman-like, in being able to bind up a wound. “*Don’t* be disheartened. Whatever is, is for the best. There must be *some* good reason why we are denied the dulcimer.”

“Oh, yes,” he assured her, “I have faith enough to believe that — quite.”

“And don’t you know,” she continued sweetly, in the gentlest of soothing voices, “it wouldn’t be wise for us to have our own way always?”

“I know,” he said.

“Just think how selfish we would become,” she told him. “Just think!”

“I do, Katrina; I do think.”

“And after all,” she added, “what is a dulcimer compared with having health? — and not being in debt, or anything?”

“Nothing,” he replied meekly, and her heart swelled proudly to see how comforted he seemed, and resigned, and peaceful.

“Come,” she said, “let’s play pinochle, and forget all about it.” And it was entirely to the dear child’s credit that he laughed heartily throughout the game.

Such moods of weakness, she reflected, were

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rare in Mr. Larry. Usually he was the happiest of men, and they went out blithely now into a world she had never known, with whose glittering pageantry he loved to dazzle those wondering eyes of hers. It was that world down town, in which she saw him now as a greater hero than ever she had pictured him with all her fondness. Under his escort she witnessed miracles quite as enchanting and almost as marvelous as Arabian nights. Doors opened to him at his merest smile or nod. Door-keepers bowed submissively as she passed them, leaning proudly on her Aladdin's arm. On crowded festivals, when other people pressed and fought and stood on tiptoe and craned their necks to see, two magic words — *The Herald* — and presto! she and Aladdin were whisked up back stairs to the airiest vantage-places, from which parade or ball, orators or games Olympian, lay in gala splendor at their very feet. Even without him such sway he had, mere bits of pasteboard with his magic formula, or their corners clipped, admitted Katrina and her dear friend Betty to afternoon musicales and discreet diversions of the ladies' clubs.

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If, however, there was one instant in this new life when her soul trembled with unaccustomed bliss, and if in Mr. Larry's days there was one moment of moments when he felt rewarded beyond his due, it was when Katrina in a very halo of her youthful loveliness, came down the stairs to him, dressed for the play. No younger beau, he was wont to assure himself, as he sat waiting in the little study, smoking and musing of what time had done for him — no younger gallant had ever waited with a blither expectancy, nor had ever saint, he told himself as he heard her step upon the stair and stood in the door-way raising his eyes to her, beheld the vision of a fairer angel descending in a cloud of fire.

She came down softly in rustling silk, its color his own old-fashioned fancy — dregs-of-wine. She wore at her throat lace and a necklace of sparkling garnets which had been her mother's when a maid herself. Her hair curled sweetly about her forehead, her lips were parted, her cheeks rosy, her eyes shining with the modest exhilaration of a young girl's setting forth.

The gown was of Mr. Larry's choosing. It

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was a birthday gift, and he had grudged no time, or money, or embarrassment to make it perfect according to his whim. Its color was a trifle too mature, she fancied, for her tender years, but she would not confess it for the world, when *he* found such joy in its sober loveliness. He had had no eyes for any other hue, it seemed; though the counters were like rainbows, he had inquired instantly for dregs-of-wine.

The yards required were another matter, a doubtful question which he had faced anxiously, even with suspicion.

“But is that inclusive?” he had asked.

“Beg pardon?” the young lady clerk replied.

“Does that include everything?”

“Everything.”

“Plaits, ruffles — gores — everything?”

“Everything.”

“You are quite certain?”

“Perfectly. I am not in the habit of telling lies.”

“Oh, I don’t doubt you, Miss, but you see — this is a — a very particular kind of gift. It’s for a lady.”



SHE CAME DOWN SOFTLY

"Ah," said the clerk, archly. "I understand! When is this to be?"

Mr. Larry stared. Then a peculiar smile flitted a moment about his lips, as with a furtive glance at the neighboring shoppers he whispered hoarsely:

"Next Thursday evening, at seven o'clock."

This was the gown which Katrina had christened at Betty Wendell's, an evening party from which she returned unpleasantly surprised. There had been some games, it appeared, of a frivolous character.

"And what do you mean by frivolous games?" Mr. Larry inquired.

"Oh, *you* know," she replied.

"I am constrained to believe that you must mean kissing-games," he suggested.

"Oh, *all* such absurd pastimes," Katrina answered, tapping her foot upon the fender. "I do not approve of them at all."

And after a little she added thoughtfully, "and I do not believe in co-education, either."

"Ah," he cried, "that's another matter."

"But *is* it?" she replied earnestly, and blushed deeply when he laughed.

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This was the gown which Katrina gathered so prudently in her gloved fingers on the muddy cross-walk at the Grand, and which, once seated within the theater, she confided happily to Mr. Larry “compared so favorably” with the others there. It was, in truth, the most wonderful thing she had ever worn — yet here was a world in which she could forget it utterly with the first overture, and never remember it again!

Mr. Larry — handsome as a prince, she thought, in his new dress-suit — was far more engrossed in that living drama in the soul beside him, than in the one before his eyes. Had he shut them, blotting out play and players from his ken, and had he stopped his ears, he would have known precisely by the pressure of Katrina’s hand upon his arm those awful moments when evil stalked upon the stage, and by his arm’s release might have sworn safely to the de’il’s discomfiture. Katrina, philosophizing upon Some Aspects of the Modern Drama, confessed a preference for the first and last acts — the last, more especially — because as she pointed out subtly to Mr. Larry, “the ones in the middle” could

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“never be depended on.” As might be inferred, this remark was the fruit of mature reflection, and of a knowledge watered with many tears.

It would not have been possible, for example, on that first, that wondrous, never to be forgotten evening of her young life, when she clung timidly to Aladdin’s arm and passed marveling into that throng of the “handsomest people she had ever seen,” and the lights and music of the Grand. That first play was *The Flower o’ the Thorn*.

“Oh, Mr. Larry,” she whispered breathlessly when the curtain fell on the middle act, “you *do* think it will come out all right?”

She was looking up anxiously through her tears.

“I do,” he assured her, patting her hand. “I do, Katrina. I think we have every reason, my dear, to hope for the best.”

“Why, he simply worships her!” Katrina declared. “You can see it in his face.”

“True,” said Mr. Larry.

“But why doesn’t he speak then? *I* would.”

“Ah, but you see he can’t — not yet, you know. You see he supposes that she —”

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"I know, Mr. Larry, but she *doesn't!* She simply loathes the other man."

"True," he replied, "but you see Arnold—"

"Isn't he lovely!" Katrina interposed.
"And Miss Dare! Oh, I wish he'd hurry!"

"He will," Mr. Larry assured her cheerfully. "He will. Don't worry."

"But some one ought to *tell* him," Katrina protested, wiping her eyes. "Think of all those people standing around up there, never saying a word — not a single word to him!"

"It is rather thoughtless of them," Mr. Larry conceded.

"Why, it's criminal!" Katrina replied. "Oh, dear," she added, with a little shudder as a bell tinkled; and then as the curtain slowly began to rise she gave Mr. Larry a tremulous sidelong smile, and laid her hand, by way of precaution upon his arm.

"Oh, — oh, — oh!"

Never had she beheld so lovely an orchard as this apple bower! There was every promise of a bounteous harvest. It must have been a perfect spring — no blighting frosts — for the flowers lay thick as bees upon every bough, and their petals fell softly, softly, softly and

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silently as snow. There was, moreover, an enchanting vista of smiling meadows in the rear, with purple hills against an azure sky. The very nets to which the orchard clung, faintly descried even by Katrina's eyes, were not annoying, but lent, rather, a hazy, dreamy texture to this Arcadia. And in the midst, seated pensively upon a rock which the petals littered, was the fairest of earth's younger daughters — Viola — in a rosy frock and a delicious hat, speaking to herself the most bea-u-tiful words in a voice all tears and silver.

Katrina, spell-bound, sat with fixed eyes and parted lips, motionless save for that tide rising and falling in her tender bosom.

Enter, into that Eden, the serpent, as of old — a man, immaculate and tailor-made, but too dark-complexioned to be trusted, stalking about in a pair of brown riding boots and speaking in a grating voice, so that Katrina, instantly, was in a panic, and clutched Mr. Larry's sleeve.

Well —

It was a beautiful play, that *Flower o' the Thorn*, and very popular in Katrina's girlhood,

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and there was one breathless moment in it, there in the orchard, when Katrina jumped, and Viola turned upon the evil one, her frail form quivering with emotion — “I hate you, Adam Varney!”

“*Goody!*” cried Katrina — though her voice and the patter of her eager hands were lost hopelessly in the thunder of the gods above.

Then Arnold entered — Arnold of the strong right arm and the golden hair — and from that blessed moment there was nothing but the loveliest loveliness, and when the curtain fell, Katrina was in happy tears. She could not speak for them, but Mr. Larry helped her with her cloak and guided her gently to the outer air.

“And now,” said he, “what do you say to a nice little oyster-stew?”

“Oh, *Mr. Larry!*” she managed to utter, half in surprise, half in reproachfulness. “Do you feel like *oysters?*”

IV

HIGHER THINGS

WHILE there was a grave doubt in Mr. Larry's mind that his friend Billy White would ever forgive him, their casual meetings were amiable enough, and if there was anything changed in the demeanor of the sporting editor, it was of a nature desirable rather than otherwise, for he seemed more respectful in his address, more studious of his English, less jaunty in his replies.

"How long before you're going?" he mildly inquired, pausing by Mr. Larry's desk one afternoon.

"Now," was the answer.

"Anything special on?" asked Mr. White. "I'll go along with you, if you don't object."

"Why, not at all," replied Mr. Larry, and went out pleasantly enough, with Billy on his arm. They went to Relish's, where it is possible for very good friends to find a stall somewhat removed from the general eye and bustle,

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and there sat down quietly, in the best of humor, to discuss the world.

“Why, Billy, where’s your plaid vest?”

Mr. White smiled and pulled reflectively at his college briar.

“What an ass,” he remarked, “a young kid makes of himself! — swaggering around bars in a fifteen dollar Jones-McAdam suit, and as if nobody had ever said ‘Hell’ before.” Mr. Larry regarded the youth with mild astonishment.

“I used to think,” Billy continued in his contemplative vein, “that a plaid vest was the hall and mint mark of virility.” It was evident that he had chosen the word, for he spoke each syllable with great distinctness, and smiled contentedly when it was done.

“And now?” Mr. Larry inquired.

“Oh, *now!*” was the answer, and they smoked silently for a moment or two, while Mr. Larry recovered from his bewilderment.

“Had any luck lately?” he asked.

“Haven’t played for a month.”

Mr. Larry stared.

“Poker, I meant.”

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"Oh, I know," Billy replied. "Poker's all right, but after all —"

He paused to knock out the ashes.

"— after all, Mac, it's a mighty small part of life — comparatively speaking."

"Oh, yes! Comparatively speaking," Mr. Larry agreed.

Billy deliberately refilled his pipe, in silence. He struck a match, puffed vigorously two or three times, and leaned back thoughtfully on the leather seat.

"No," he remarked, "a fellow can't be wasting his time at that sort of thing, if he ever wants to *do* anything."

"Oh, no," Mr. Larry murmured, giving the youth a furtive glance or two.

"No," Billy White resumed. "I guess my cub days are about over. Sitting up nights and raising Cain generally may be well enough when you've got nothing else to — occupy your mind; when you're breaking in writing football stuff, and all that rot — as I've been doing."

He shook his head.

"But there comes a time in every man's life," he added, gazing dreamily at the distant

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bar — “and you know it, Mac, as well as I do — when a fellow has to — well — think *seriously* of a thing or two. You know what I mean.”

“Oh, yes; I know what you mean,” Mr. Larry gravely replied.

“Mac,” Billy White announced, striking the table with his fist, and scowling fiercely, “I’ve cut the whole business!”

“By George, Billy, you don’t mean it!”

“I do. I have, Mac; I’ve cut the whole business — forever.”

His face relaxed.

“Not,” he added, with a wave of his pipe — “not that there is anything inherently distasteful in such things.”

“Oh, no,” said Mr. Larry.

“But because,” Billy White explained, “I realize that the time has come when I’ve got to think of the future.”

“Excellent idea, Billy,” Mr. Larry replied.

“Why,” said the sporting editor, lowering his voice and speaking confidentially, “you know, Mac, as well as I do, that this business of writing up man-fights, dog-fights, cock-fights, as you expressed it one day to me —”

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"Oh," Mr. Larry interposed, "you mustn't mind what I said. It was all in fun."

"I don't. I don't mind," Billy White assured him with eager earnestness.

"I was only jesting," Mr. Larry explained.

"Understand that, Mac. I understand. I understand perfectly. But what I was getting at, was this: you were dead right, you know! No question about it. This here business of writing up sport is all right if a chap doesn't care for anything else; but when you have a taste for *higher* things — you know what I mean."

"Oh, yes, I know; I know what you mean," Mr. Larry assured him.

"Aspirations," Billy White explained. "When a man has aspirations, and all that kind of thing — that is, of course, if he has any innate refinement, you understand — you understand what I mean."

"Oh, yes; I understand what you mean."

"Mind, Mac: I'm not making any brag, you know. I'm not setting myself up for a little tin god, you understand, just because I happen to see in life what a lot of my friends *don't* see. I'm not saying that I'm better than

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they are, because I've cut it all out, and they haven't."

"Oh, no," Mr. Larry acquiesced.

"All I say is *this*, Mac: that I ought to be getting better assignments. I've got it *in* me. I *know* I have. And they've kept me at sport long enough."

"Well," Mr. Larry replied, "something has certainly stirred you all up, Billy."

"Something has," Billy White replied. "And do you want to know what? It was what you said that day — about the man-fights, dog-fights, cock-fights! It set me to thinking. And it was about time, too."

Mr. Larry looked pleased.

"Well," he replied, "I'm glad if I — if anything I ever said was a help to you, Billy."

"Well, it was," the young man warmly assured him. "I went away hot — oh, I own up! — I went away hot as — well, I was pretty mad about it, but I got to thinking down in that plaguey little Vale of Cashmere in the park — you know the spot — and I said to myself, 'Billy White, what's it going to be? Man-fights and dog-fights all your life — or higher things?'"

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Mr. Larry nodded approvingly.

"And what," Billy White inquired, "could any self-respecting, ambitious fellow, with ten grains of refinement in him, say to that?"

"What do you propose to do?" Mr. Larry asked. He felt drawn to Billy White."

"Well, there you've got me," the youth replied, his face falling. "That's what I can't make out. This fancy-vest life I've been leading has spoiled everything, I'm afraid. They all think I'm a sport, and they know I can write the guff, and I couldn't convince them in a thousand years, I suppose, that I could write anything else. Unless —"

"Unless what, Billy?"

"Well, unless *you* help me. You've helped me once as I say, by putting the whole business in a kind of — epigram. I owe this whole damned awakening to you. I can never repay you, Mac, for opening my eyes. You go to Harned, and tell him I'm tired of these sporting assignments, that I've sowed my wild oats, and that I want to settle down. I've got a B.A., you know — so I ought to know something about the arts. And I've got an uncle who's a bang-up critic — sits up all night

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writing books on architecture, and all that sort of thing — and my sisters are musical — and I've got a cousin on the stage. You can see, for yourself, the kind of environment, I've had, and why I'm sick of writing this base-ball twaddle."

"Not that it's inherently distasteful, of course," Mr. Larry suggested.

"Oh, no," said Billy, "but for higher reasons."

"Very well, my boy, I must be going now, but I'll do what I can. I'll speak to Harned in the morning."

Billy White seized Mr. Larry's hand.

"By Jove, that's good of you, Mac! If you'll do that, I'll be Yours Truly for the rest of my life, so help me I will. You'll see. You can't begin to guess all this means to me."

"Probably not," Mr. Larry replied; "but I'll be glad to see you doing well, Billy."

"Well, if I do, Mac, I'll owe it all to you. Sorry you've got to go so soon. Such conversations don't come my way very often, and you've given me some corking good ideas."

Mr. Larry smiled incredulously.

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"I have!"

Billy nodded, and Mr. Larry's eyes twinkled delightedly.

"Well then, think over all I've said, Billy—and good-by."

"I will, Mac. Good-by, and good-luck. And oh, I say, don't forget —"

"Harned," Mr. Larry replied nodding. "I won't."

"Oh, yes, Harned, of course. But I meant don't forget to—remember me to Miss June."

V

A WRITING MAN

MR. LARRY was one of those homely men to whom Time is kind; in whom wrinkles are no detraction but with whitening hair add a rare dignity and benignant grace, as if Nature had grown remorseful for her long inclemency, granting these belated favors as a recompense for those other, more youthful charms denied. He looked, as Katrina's friends would tell her, like a man who might have done great deeds had he desired. That he had failed to do them, that he had never written, for example, that book which every man feels in his heart he might have written, and which every journalist means to write some day, when he finds the leisure, was a matter of regret to his admiring ward. The things he uttered seemed far more droll to her than any she had ever read. That he knew the world as well as novelists she could not doubt, listening to those trenchant words in which he pictured it for her sole amusement. Surely he must

know life, she thought, who could analyze hers so well that she often marveled at his insight. He had never been a girl, yet those inner feelings that perplexed and troubled her, came quite to pieces in his hands. Why had he never used that power to win a name? She sometimes asked him, but there was more of humor than of satisfaction in his vague replies. He had been too busy, he explained, and beside, in these days when there is sure to be a pen scratching away behind every ink-well, he was inclined to believe that it was a distinction *not* to have written books, and in an age when newspapers turn their search-lights upon every cranny of the universe it was an honor, he claimed, to have escaped their rays.

'Excuses, these were, but hardly reasons, Katrina held, and as she grew in the wisdom of that very world she would have had him write about, as her mind matured and flowered in a thousand fragrant and rosy thoughts, she became more certain that deep down in his hidden life there was a Cause for this failure to become a hero. Young Mr. White, for one, agreed with her, and other friends, though less

familiar with Mr. Larry's professional career, were quite as confident that he might have burned genius on higher altars, had he but tried. To Katrina's mind there was a pleasing pathos in the thought of this renunciation, investing him with an interest almost as desirable as fame itself — and more romantic.

"We must remember," she said with dignity and a heightened color to one who had charged Mr. Larry with the sin of indolence — "we must remember that he is a bachelor."

"And what, pray, has that to do with it?" she was asked.

"It might have everything," she replied. "He knows the world — yes; he knows the mind; but how — how possibly — can he know the heart?"

She was a little astonished at her own insight, and from that moment of inspiration, born of the necessity for his defense, her soul swelled with a new and very tender pity for his loveless life. How a wife might have kindled his fondest dreams into deeds as beautiful, it was not at all difficult for her to fancy, knowing so well, as she once told him, what her mother had been to Professor June.

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“Love,” she observed, “is a curious thing. That is, choosing is curious. Isn’t it odd that so many nice people — there was Aunt Miranda, for instance — should be left out, when so many *queer* people get in!”

“That,” Mr. Larry replied, “is how I used to feel as a boy, when I saw the other folks going to the circus.”

“Dear Aunt Miranda!” Katrina mused. “You should have known Aunt Miranda, Mr. Larry. She used to tell me about my mother. Mother was a great favorite, she said. Oh, there were several young men who wanted to marry her — one especially, a splendid fellow — brilliant, Aunt Miranda said. But mother went visiting, and there she met father, and being Presbyterian, and mother being Presbyterian, and all, why, I suppose — ”

Katrina pondered.

“Nobody knows what became of the other man. He was invited to the wedding, Aunt Miranda said, but he didn’t come, which was not so strange, of course, but it was then discovered that he had disappeared.”

“Disappeared!”

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“Yes, he had disappeared. And he never came back.”

Mr. Larry stared.

“Or, at least, *they* never saw him again, Aunt Miranda said. It was rumored, I believe, that he did return — oh, months afterwards, and quite suddenly—but they never saw him.”

“And what,” Mr. Larry inquired with some hesitation, “do *you* think,—became of that other man?”

“Well,” she replied, “I’ve often thought of it, and while, of course, no one can say, I have had an idea —”

She paused doubtfully.

“Well, it seems to me,” she began again, slowly, “that the very most natural thing that would happen to a man like that — and I’ve even considered just how Jane Austin would have looked at it — first would be this: he would become *very* serious, don’t you think?

— and would seldom smile; and would read a good deal, until at last he would be just a quiet, lovely, elderly gentleman — oh, quite the opposite of his youth, you know — and kind to everybody, especially animals, and children — especially girls.”

Mr. Larry stared.

"And how," he inquired, "did you think of that?"

"Why, I reasoned backward."

"Backward!"

"I mean," she explained, and she flushed a little, "that I said to myself — now you mustn't mind, Mr. Larry!"

"Why, no; of course not."

"You see," said Katrina, "I *had* to take some one, just for example; and you are the only old bachelor I know."

"I see," he said.

"You aren't angry?"

"Not at all, my child. It was most ingenious."

"Do you know," she said, "I think Aunt Miranda loved that man?"

The match, flaring in Mr. Larry's fingers, burned to their tips.

"No!" he said.

"I do, really," she repeated. "I didn't guess it till long, long afterward — quite recently in fact. I was so young, you see, when she told me about him. It wasn't so much what Aunt Miranda said, as the *way* she said it."

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“How did she say it?” he inquired. Katrina was doubtful.

“I don’t know. I couldn’t explain it. I only feel it, that is all. It’s an Intuition, Mr. Larry, and besides, it’s not impossible, you know.”

He was silent a moment.

“No — it’s not impossible,” he said.

“It would make a lovely story,” Katrina told him. “The Other Man! Why don’t *you* write it?”

“I!”

“Yes. You could do it *so well!*”

He shook his head.

But the more she thought of it, of the book which he had never written, and of this story which he declined to tell, the more she urged that he should try.

“Just once,” she pleaded. “*Some* story, any way, Mr. Larry. Just think, if you write a novel they’ll publish your picture — and your middle name!”

“Sh!” was his answer. “Don’t speak of it, my dear. I guess you don’t know my middle name.”

A WRITING MAN

"No," she replied. "What is your middle name, Mr. Larry?"

He looked about him, but the door was shut.

"Sassoon," he whispered. "It's a family name."

"Well," she admitted, "I don't think it adds particularly."

"Nor I," he assented. "My parents, you see, had family pride, but were hard of hearing."

"That might account for it," she said.

"No doubt of it," he answered. "They were loyal souls, without being musical. You catch the distinction?"

"I think I do," she answered. "And was Sass —"

"Sassoon, my love."

"Was Sassoon your mother's name?"

"Thank God, no," he replied fervently. "Her name was Riley."

Many little bookish dialogues whiled away hours at their disposal, and slowly but surely Katrina's appeals to him began to tell. Why not write a book? he asked himself. It was, after all, the one dream left to him, as he had

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said — the one young dream still possible of realization. And Katrina wished it: there was force in that.

“I will,” he told her. “I’ll write a book! I’ll write it for you, Katrina. By George, I will! No — we’ll both write! You write your story, and I’ll write mine, here, evenings. We’ll write together!”

“What shall you call your story?” she inquired.

“‘Katrina,’” he replied, so promptly that she gasped.

“Really?”

“Of course I will.”

“And mine,” she said, “will be ‘The Other Man.’ When shall we begin?”

“Now. To-night.”

It was the first time that she had ever seen him at his desk, and she marveled at the ease with which ink flowed for him, her eyes widening to see how one flourish of his pen would bring words popping from the well, like fairies summoned by a magic wand.

“You *are* an Aladdin!” she declared. “I don’t see how you do it. Why, you don’t have to even think!”

“Don’t I?” he replied.

“Why, no,” she answered. “You don’t stop to bite your pen, or draw pictures, or look out of the window, or anything.”

“Is that how you think?”

“Why, yes. Always. All my pen-holders are bitten at the end.”

“You’re a squirrel,” he replied. “Does it really help you?”

“Oh, lots,” she told him; “why, sometimes, when I have been a-sitting that way, biting my pen, the most beautiful thoughts come—things that I hadn’t even dreamed I would think.”

“And all from nibbling,” he remarked, astonished.

“That’s *my* experience,” she replied. “But you don’t bite at all.”

“No,” he said. “You see I’m accustomed to using typewriters, and you can’t bite a type-writer.”

Katrina laughed.

“Well, I shouldn’t like to,” she assured him.

“Then, too,” he explained, “time’s precious on the *Herald*.”

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Night after night, now, they wrote together at the same great desk — the old walnut monster which had been her father's — Katrina on one side, Mr. Larry on the other; Katrina pensive, smooth-browed, self-possessed; Mr. Larry scowling darkly at the sheets before him, absent of mind, and as the evening waned, shaggier and shaggier of hair. Quietly watching him when her own thoughts lagged, Katrina, nibbling dreamily at her pen, marveled at the spell which bound him to his task.

She saw him begin, erect in his chair, his brows at a droll, half-quizzical elevation, his eyes dilating, his nostrils twitching now and then as with the scent of battle in the air, his hands moving incessantly with his pen or his cigarette, for he puffed valorously in those earlier moments, his feet shuffling, his whole frame shifting, army-like, on the brink of action, uncertain which of its forces should lead the van. She saw him then charge suddenly — a troop of words dashing forward, only to be flung back, crumpled and fluttering to the floor, while he lighted another cigarette.

Three puffs.

His shoulders lower a little; his eyebrows drop. For a moment a death-like silence reigns — then his pen begins, nervously — here a word, there the semblance of one — there another struck out instantly as by a rifle-ball, a second moving up swiftly into place, till one by one, line by line, the clear white field is blackened by an ever-growing, surging host — and the action's on. Now and again the pen is dropped — a match crackles, blazes for a moment, and goes out, while a thin blue cloud spreads slowly over the battle-field. And then, as the moments pass, Katrina forgets her task, forgets the pen-holder now resting idly between her lips, and with fascinated gaze sees those broad shoulders hump manfully over Mr. Larry's knees as he sits forward, poised on the very edge of his revolving chair. She sees his face droop, his brooding eyes darken with a kind of mighty rage, the furrows deepening in their midst, his lips tightening, his breathing labored, as if half withheld, his cigarette now lifeless between his teeth — and over all, that long, gray curling forelock of his hair descending, lowering with each trailing line, till it shades his eyes

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and he strikes it back with an angry flourish of the hand.

His very garments share in the tumult. The bosom of his shirt bulges formidably; the collar of his coat rises to his ears; his cuffs creep out, threatening to enclose his hands, while his sleeves recede; and, strangest of all — a mystery never to be solved, it seems, though Katrina strives, time and again, to fix her gaze upon it — always in some unguarded jiffy when her eyes are elsewhere, that little bow-tie of his melts by magic, and wriggles away in two little black strings.

"Dear Mr. Larry," she whispers as he drops his pen. "You look so ruffledy."

"Ruffledy?"

"Yes. It musses you all up, to write, doesn't it?"

But he only laughs at her, lighting another cigarette as he leans back comfortably in his chair.

"You've got ink on your nose."

"Where? Here?"

"No. There. Oh, mercy! Don't. You're making it worse. Why, look at your hands!"

"By George! Katrina, how do you manage?

What do the lady-writers do, I wonder? You don't suppose — ”

“ Dear, no! ”

“ Why not? Jane Austen, for example: don't you suppose that she ever got ink on her nose? ”

“ Mr. Larry! No! Callers might come.”

“ By George! ” he replies. “ That sets me to thinking. Take poets, Katrina, and all other— sensitive writing souls. They don't like to be caught in their fine frenzies, do they? — and why? Because the afflatus may be interrupted? Why, no. They're ashamed of themselves! Aye, that's the secret! They don't want to be looked at. Just think, my love! A poet, a laureate maybe, with a great blot of ink on his nose! ”

“ But, ” says Katrina, “ the women don't spatter. They dip neatly — so. ”

“ Maybe, ” he answers. “ But I'd like to have seen that Eliot woman writing the scene where the Floss spills over — Golly! — *there's* ink for your nose! ”

VI

ARCADIAN VISTAS

THOSE fine frenzies lasted one week. At the end of seven nights the afflatus ebbed, waned, subsided — “busted” was the verb Mr. Larry used. He was surprised, he said, and pained, and shocked beyond expression, at the English language, of whose utter shallowness he had never so much as dreamed; and as he said this he threw down his pen.

Katrina suggested biting it, but that came to nothing. Then he tried pencils—one hard, two soft: they would only mark. He rose and tramped up and down the study; he ran his fingers through his hair; he whistled, hummed, drummed, hemmed, hawed, and smoked incessantly — to no avail. The words would not come. Then he went to the shelves, for a bracer of Kipling, and a chaser of Howells, as he told Katrina. He skimmed some essays — “Books,” “Nature,” “Culture,” “Method,” “Selection,” “Self-expression,” “The Creative Mind,” “Con-

summation" — but consummated naught. So he tried the advertisements in the back of a magazine.

Katrina looked grave.

"How far have you got?" she inquired sympathetically.

"I'm at Chapter IV."

"What is it about?"

"That's what I don't know. That's why I'm treed."

"Then why don't you skip it?" she asked.

"Yes, but — where shall I skip to?"

"Why, to Chapter V."

"But I don't know what Chapter V is about, either."

"You don't?"

"No."

"You couldn't skip *two* chapters, could you?" she inquired cautiously. But he shook his head.

"Oh, no," he replied. "That would never do."

It was a problem, plainly enough, but when her mind gave out, Katrina's heart rose to the emergency.

"Don't be discouraged," she said cheer-

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fully. "I'd wait, if I were you, till the spirit moves."

Mr. Larry waited. First, however, he re-filled the ink-well, chose a new pen, and with a tempting array of fresh white sheets on the desk before him he thus began:

CHAPTER IV

A

and threw himself back resigned, receptive, entirely unbiased as he confessed, with a mind open to conviction on any score and to any rational degree.

And the spirit moved him.

It was the merest joggle of the elbow, to be sure, but it altered the matter to read thus:

CHAPTER IV

The

after which Author and Spirit drew back a little to regard their loins.

"I think," said Katrina, "I know what's the matter, Mr. Larry?"

"What?"

"Why, something's missing."

"Don't I know that?" he retorted sharply.

"Oh, I don't mean what you mean," she quickly answered. "I mean what you told me once — don't you remember? — pears on a wall!"

"That's so," he replied.

"You should be in the country," she declared, "to write your novel. You should have that nice little cottage you used to dream of. Then you could write."

"I believe I could," Mr. Larry replied. "There's a lot in environment. Right conditions — that's what every man must have, to accomplish anything. I read so this evening in one of those essays."

"Think!" cried Katrina, clasping her hands — "of a nice, green, flowery place to write in! — apple-trees, golden-rod, bouncing Betty! Oh, I should *like* to have a farm, I think, and make things grow! Wouldn't it be fine if we could sell this town house and buy one in the country?"

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“Do you really mean it?” Mr. Larry asked.

“Of course, I do. An old, old, *old* little place, you know, with just enough trees and bushes and ground about it to grow our own vegetables, and hay for the horse, and have chickens, and ducks, and doves, and bee-es! Just a nice *little* farm,” Katrina rushed on exultantly, “where one wouldn’t have to get up at five in the morning and milk cows and do drudgery, and all that sort of thing, you know, which tires country people out, and makes them look lean and withered before their time. Oh, not that at all! That would be horrid. But just a nice, sweet little place, where we could live quietly and reasonably, with good fresh milk, and honey, and eggs, and butter, and where we could stroll in the fields and pick wild-flowers all day long!”

There was a heavenly radiance in Katrina’s face.

“And you’d study and write lovely books! — and I’d play the piano!”

The child was in an ecstasy.

“And who,” asked Mr. Larry with some hesitation, “would do the—the work?”

“Oh, *we* would,” she replied; “but we

wouldn't *make work of it!* Don't you see? That's just the point!"

He seemed astonished.

"Why, yes," she explained. "That's just where farmers make their mistake. They don't go at it right."

"It's a new thought to me," Mr. Larry confessed, "as applied to our country; but it was quite common, I believe, formerly, in Arcadia."

"Let's do it!" cried Katrina; but Mr. Larry hesitated.

"Breakfast when?" he inquired cautiously.

"Eight," she replied.

"Suits me," he said.. "But how about the stock?"

"The stock?"

"Yes. Stock, you know, has an unpleasant habit of rising with Aurora, and blatting about it, and raising Cain generally."

Katrina smiled.

"Ours wouldn't," she assured him. "We'd buy blooded stock, that would stay up late nights and sleep in the morning."

"In that case," cried Mr. Larry, "I agree heartily. But where shall we have our farm?"

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“Well,” she replied pensively — thinking of the farm in *The Flower o’ the Thorn*, with the orchard clinging to the net, and the apple blossoms falling in a snowy shower at Viola’s feet — “it doesn’t much matter where we have it, so long as we have some mountains in the distance —”

“A perfectly reasonable demand,” Mr. Larry interposed.

“— and a river, or lake,” Katrina continued, “and the loveliest little mossy-shingled house, gray and weather-beaten, among the lilacs, and under the shade of tall elm trees — and with honey-suckle climbing on the porch — and an old, old well.”

“I have heard of such places,” said Mr. Larry, “and I think, that, between us, we might buy one.”

“Oh, cheap!” she added. “An abandoned farm!”

“I like the idea,” he confessed; “it’s so mossy and lilac-y. I used to think that I could write in a place like that, and by George, I’m beginning to think so again!”

“Oh, I know that you could!” Katrina assured him. “I should write some myself.

Perhaps not *this* story," she added doubtfully, gazing at the handful of neglected pages on the desk, "for somehow I'm beginning to wonder if prose is my style after all."

"Verse, do you think?" Mr. Larry suggested. "Would you desert Jane Austen?"

"I shall never desert Jane Austen," Katrina declared. "But in the country, you know, I think it's quite natural to turn to poetry. In fact I have leanings that way — already."

"Indeed!" he said.

"Yes. And oh, I forgot to tell you what I found to-day! *Sonnets from the Portuguese* — an old copy that mother had when she was a girl! And on the fly-leaf, what do you think it says?"

"What?" asked Mr. Larry, rising so suddenly that he knocked over the waste-basket. It was his face, however, that most astonished her.

"Are you ill, Mr. Larry?"

"Oh, no," he replied, sitting down again.

"Are you quite sure you're not ill, Mr. Larry?"

"Quite; quite sure," was the answer. "What was this — this inscription, did you say?"

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“Oh, the strangest thing!” she replied. “Let’s see if I can remember it. It went like this: ‘To Katrina L.—otherwise known—otherwise known as the Fair Cordelia’—now, listen, Mr. Larry, for the strangest part of all’s to come!—‘the fair Cordelia, *The Lady — of the Dregs-of-Wine!*’”

There was a breathless silence.

“So *mother* must have had a dregs-of-wine!”

Katrina’s face was shining with delight.

“Isn’t it interesting!” she cried. “And isn’t it wonderful, Mr. Larry, that *you* should have chosen the very same color my mother wore, for *me!*”

“And isn’t it wonderful that mother should have been called Cordelia, and that now *you* should have a Delia, Mr. Larry, in ‘Cap and Bells!’ Oh, I think it’s the *strangest* coincidence I ever heard of! Why, it’s like a story!—isn’t it? But *that’s not all!*”

Mr. Larry, who had been listening without a syllable, without the glimmer of a smile for all these wonders, leaned slightly forward.

“No,” said Katrina, “*that’s not all.* It says on the fly-leaf: ‘To Katrina L., otherwise

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known as the Fair Cordelia, the Lady of the Dregs-of-Wine — *from the Bean-Pole!*”

Mr. Larry gasped.

“Fancy!” said Katrina. “Fancy *father* being called the Bean-Pole!”

And Mr. Larry — sank back, smiling, in his chair.

VII

THE RENAISSANCE

IT was now a pleasant time in the life of Katrina and her Mr. Larry, one of those seasons which pass tranquilly, destined however to grow in eventfulness as they recede. Never, in Katrina's memory of him, had he seemed so happy; never had he laughed so much, or said droller or tenderer things, or been more prodigal in chocolates and holidays. His heart seemed to her a fountain of eternal youth, and through her girlhood's vague and shadowy hopes, as through a golden mist, she saw no future, however distant, that he did not share.

If there was one accusation more than another at which Mr. Larry would have merely smiled, as being unworthy of any other answer, it would have been the charge that he was negligent in his watchfulness of that life entrusted to his care. Were his eyes not always upon that fair young face? Could a shadow cross it in his presence that he did not mark

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it instantly and seek to alter it to a smile? — that quick, bright smile which warmed his heart with the consciousness that he was much beloved? Did not the very memory of it creep inevitably between those lines which he wrote daily, warming them also to a kindlier spirit for his fellow-men?

That stinging sharpness which had been Mr. Larry's pride in other days, and which he had made a thing to be feared and reckoned with in that public life which he lashed so mercilessly with his pen, had disappeared, and however better for his soul this change might be, it won no favor at the *Herald*. It had been noted by those above him, whose interests he served, and even the younger members of the staff, who had envied formerly his subtle irony and biting wit, now marked the change in him. He had grown faint-hearted, they declared; he was too compassionate; erred now on the side of clemency where once he had been relentless in pursuit of the evils of the day. These, it was said, were signs of decrepitude, or rather of the premature decay of powers overtaxed by a veritable vampire of a profession, whose insatiable de-

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mands upon a man's invention and unceasing vigilance sucked his brains dry before their time. In some such words young *Herald* philosophers waxed eloquent over cheese and beer, pointing to Mr. Larry and others of their elder confrères as examples foretelling their own decline. Aye, Journalism was a sphere for youth to rise in, rocket-like, but with a fall as certain and more swift, they said, leaving of all that splutter of fiery stars — a stick!

Surely, then, no charge of negligence could be well-founded, when the charm of Mr. Larry's guardianship could so beguile him into a better contentment with the world — even that part of it in which Katrina had no share, and whose deeds and misdeeds he viewed more calmly than of yore. Yet with all that keenness of sight and insight which had marked him among his fellows, he was well-nigh blind, as Love is said to be, to what was passing beneath his very eyes. He had not been reckoning with Time, apparently, his own season being so serene and permanent to his consciousness, however autumnal to other minds. Yesterday he had been a man in life's very prime, Katrina but a child. To-

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day he was still that man — still stout of limb, tranquil of heart, still master of his life and destiny. To-day, also, Katrina — was she not still that child of Yesterday? To-morrow — when Time might have dealt somewhat with himself, as well — she would be a woman; but not To-day.

It was, therefore, with a sense of surprise, concern, and incredulity that Mr. Larry would awake sometimes to the realization that the child Katrina had slipped away! — just when he knew not, just how he could never tell. And, then, when he felt most certain of her absence and most alarmed by it — then, in an instant, in a smile or an altered tone of hers, in her merest word, or glance, or gesture, the child was there again, innocent, roseate-visioned, making him wonder if her disappearance had not been fancy after all.

But these transformations became more frequent. Does a child read *Sonnets from the Portuguese?* — and discourse on the Beauty of Life, and the Wisdom of Virtue, or the Certainty of Immortality? All these things, it appeared, Katrina had thought about, and had decided affirmatively. It was true, he remem-

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bered, that the child Katrina — had she not been a grave little thing always? — had given some thought to these larger matters; yet now she spoke of them in a larger way. There was a new note in the voice Mr. Larry loved to listen to, and one not to be smiled at any longer, not to be heard indulgently or whimsically altogether, as before, but to be answered seriously, though Mr. Larry observed in this a curious thing, and profited by the discovery: that just when the woman's converse became most wise and grave, the child came back again! — a little shyly, even a little tearfully sometimes, but always to cheer him with the consciousness that she was not yet lost to him, and with the hope that however Time might emphasize the woman in Katrina's soul, the child there would live and play and laugh forever.

Woman Katrina must become inevitably, he knew — was becoming now; but in a vigil which he kept one night by the law of chivalry, not kneeling in the ancient usage but smoking fiercely and striding up and down his chapel floor, with only the moonbeams to keep him company, he made a vow. And thus Mr.

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Larry became a knight! — even with his youth behind him, with his fighting time gone and those days at hand when men turn from their strife to their ease, and from their hope to their resignation, he sallied forth bravely with his dear child's favor upon his heart, armed only with his Love and Knowledge against Old Time and his flashing scythe.

“You see I am not a little girl any longer,” she once reminded him when he seemed to be doubtful of the way her hair was dressed.

“No,” he replied, but as if still wistful for the former mode, “that's true, my dear, you have caught up —”

“To my dream,” she interposed, “of being a real, real lady.”

He shook his head.

“I meant to your long words, Katrina. I can never laugh at them any more.”

In all his precautions and defenses in her behalf, lest some subtle enemy should harm those serene ideals which she had formed, or disturb the ardor of her hopes and fancies, he was never more watchful, never more ready and resolute with all the resources at his command, than when it seemed to him as if the

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perplexities of that outer world which he himself had spread before her eyes, might confuse her vision. Returning from those little venturings which she made into the varied knowledge it had to offer her, he strove not only to smooth its roughness, but to teach her confidence in the face of its awe-inspiring heights and the maze of pathways leading up to them from the level meadows where the child had played. He sought, moreover, with a journalist's contempt for all mere lovely shadows of things, to teach their substance, and all this he did so fervently and with such conviction in his tones that he seldom failed to dispel the mists.

When she returned from the Literary Club, much edified, the Renaissance having been the subject of the day, he smoked calmly, but inwardly he was apprehensive; these literary clubs might prove to be the very measles in disguise.

"Let's see," he said, "I know how to spell it, but what *was* the Renaissance, my dear?"

"I'll tell you all about it, if you'll wait a minute," Katrina answered. "I made some notes of it on my program."

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“Excellent idea,” he said.

“The Renaissance,” she began cautiously, consulting her notes, “has well been called the ‘discovery by man — of himself — and the world.’”

“Ah, I see!”

“Morelli,” Katrina continued, “calls it —”

“I wonder if he is any relation to Alderman Morelli?” Mr. Larry remarked.

Katrina shook her head.

“Mrs. Gatehouse didn’t say; but she quoted a Mr. Morelli — let’s see — what did she say? Oh, yes: Morelli — speaks admirably — of ‘the period when it was the principal aim of art — to seize — and represent — the outward abbreviation (that’s not right) — the outward appearance of persons and things — determined — determined by inward — and moral — conditions.’”

She paused triumphantly.

“Now,” said Mr. Larry, “we are getting to the roots.”

“Well, I couldn’t put everything down,” Katrina explained, but I see I have written ‘fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, fidelity to nature, enthusiasm for external beauty, just

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and harmonious proportions, veneration for the antique' — and a few other things. It was *most* interesting! Afterward they served tea and we all met Mrs. Gatehouse, who was graciousness itself. Oh, I should love to be a woman like that, and know as much as she does!"

Katrina paused.

"I don't suppose I ever shall," she added sadly. "Mrs. Gatehouse speaks four languages, fluently. She was dressed entirely in black silk trimmed with the most exquisite lace you ever saw."

Mr. Larry smoked thoughtfully.

"What is it next week?" he inquired, and again Katrina consulted her program.

"A reading from Robert Browning's *Pippa Passes*, by Paul Thornton Waddlesleigh of Philadelphia."

Mr. Larry moved uneasily in his chair, but for a moment he remained silent, gazing at the ceiling. Then he cleared his throat.

"Ever read *Huckleberry Finn*?" he asked.

"No," said Katrina.

"Do so," he replied.

She seemed amused.

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"How did you happen to think of *Huckleberry Finn*?"

"Why," he explained, "I was thinking of your Mr. Morelli's definition. Now in *Huck Finn*, as I remember it, the author 'seized and represented the outward appearances of persons and things as determined by inward — and moral — conditions.' It is evident, therefore, that the spirit of the Renaissance is not yet dead."

"Indeed it is not," Katrina assured him. "Mrs. Gatehouse as much as said so."

"When does Mrs. Gatehouse leave town?" Mr. Larry inquired.

"She left to-day."

"Good! I've got some corking ideas for an editorial on Mark Twain's relation to the Renaissance — some notions that will be new to Mark, I think."

"But why," asked Katrina, "do you want Mrs. Gatehouse out of town?"

"Well," he explained, "my ideas might seem a little novel to Mrs. Gatehouse also; as to Mr. Morelli, I cannot say."

"Would you like my program for reference?"

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“It will hardly be necessary; thank you, just the same.”

Katrina regarded Mr. Larry thoughtfully.

“You always make things modern, don’t you?” she remarked.

“Modern?”

“Yes, I mean — well, I can’t explain exactly what I mean, but you always *apply* things so, no matter how ancient they are; and you seem so cheerful about it. Why, this afternoon, I enjoyed it, and all, but it discouraged me too, hearing Mrs. Gatehouse and thinking how much she knew — and how much there is to know in this world. Oh, dear, and I can’t — I simply *can’t* remember dates, or names —”

Katrina paused and added pathetically

“— or *anything!*”

“It is not even desirable,” the knight reminded her, speaking slowly, but with passion under his lowered voice. “Now that you are on the threshold of so many remarkable facts, my child — the Renaissance, and *Pippa Passes* and Mr. Waddlesleigh of Philadelphia, and all — let me give you a piece of sound advice: Know as much as you please, and be inter-

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ested in everything, but if you love me, balance every ounce of gray matter with an ounce of good red blood — every thought of your brain with a beat of your heart. If you've got Mrs. Gatehouse in the scales to-day, and feel a bit awed, my dear, seize also upon her ‘outward appearance as determined by inward and moral conditions,’ and say to yourself: she's a very nice lady of flesh and blood, black silk and the most enchanting lace, who had the good fortune to go to Florence, and read Morelli, and now she's come back to tell us about it, like the other missionaries. Be thankful, of course, for being told of the Renaissance, but be a sight thankfuller, my dear, that there *was* such a thing! — and let your heart beat with its spirit! — let it leap warmly at that ‘outward appearance!’ — and of *what*? Mrs. Gatehouse? Dates? Facts? Good lord, no! At the ‘outward appearance’ of the self-same world, my child, that caught Raphael and Michael Angelo under the ribs! Do, in *your* art of living, every day, what they did in paint! Unless you've done that, or tried to do it, or at any rate seen that you ought to do it, the Renaissance hasn't taught you any-

thing worth the candle, my dear. Unless Mrs. Gatehouse has done the same, she has missed the very liver and lights of the Renaissance! — and the only part of it that the old Renaissanceers knew anything about — and the only part worth remembering. And when Mr. Waddlesleigh of Philadelphia rises in a frock coat and reads to you *Pippa Passes*, take joy of his tailor and of his mellifluous accents, by all means, my dear — and listen with all your five senses (for you'll need 'em) to Mr. Browning's lovely, lovely, immortal verse — but meanwhile remember what is far more important than Mr. Browning — or Mr. Waddlesleigh of Philadelphia: that Pippa passes! — that *Katrina passes!* — and go on singing, my little Pippa, while 'the year's at the spring and day's at the morn.' ”

Mr. Larry paused. His face, which had been very grave throughout, though very tender in his peroration, grew graver still.

“The Bible Class will meet on Thursday afternoon at four o'clock — Thursday afternoon at four o'clock. Wednesday evening prayer meeting at the usual hour. The Young Ladies' Guild —”

VIII

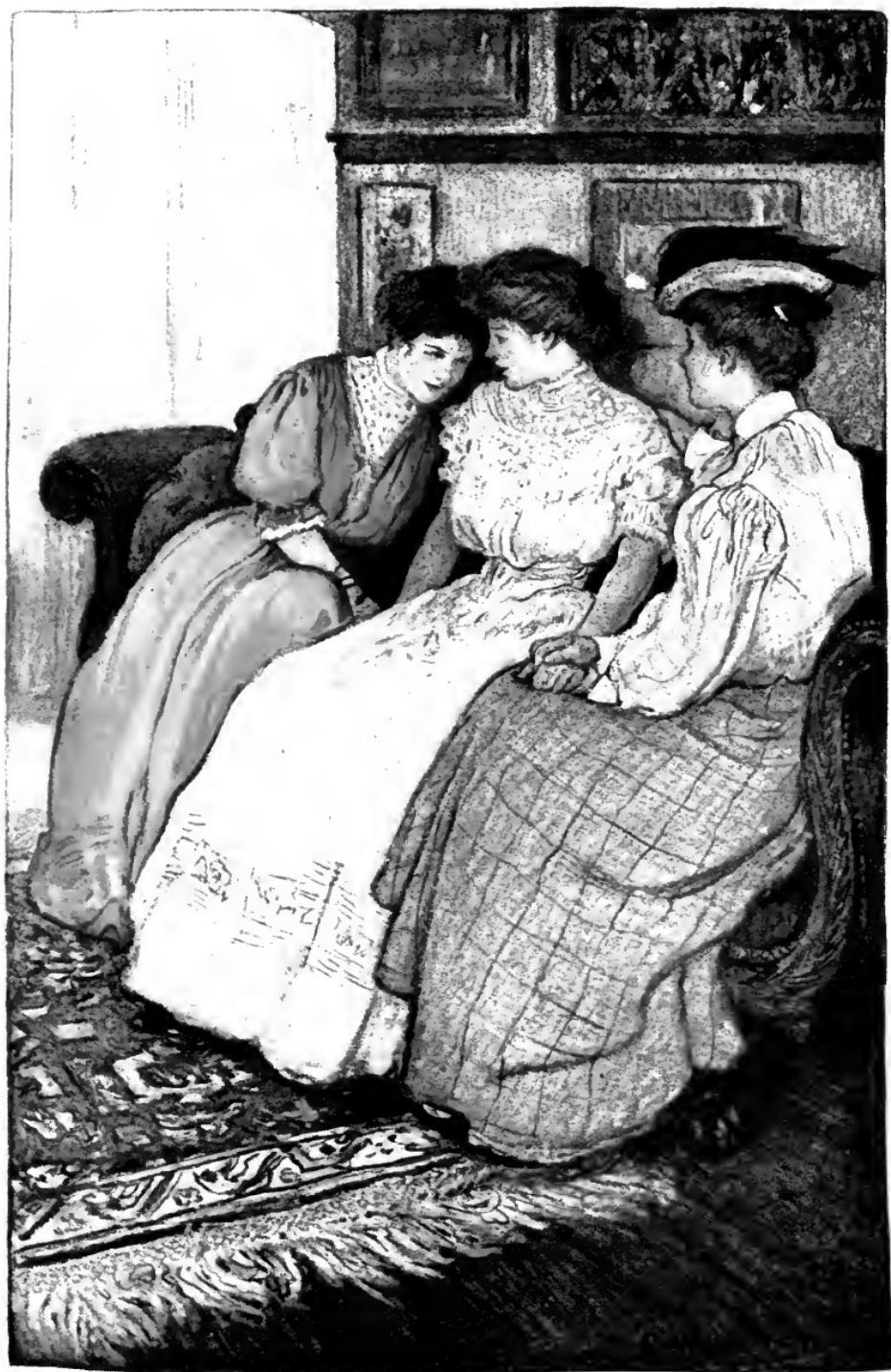
SUNDAY

SIX days of the week Mr. Larry labored, rising at seven and going forth hastily to the eight o'clock car, but on the seventh day he rose at nine, and for half an hour there was a sound of surf and song in the bath-room, from which he emerged at last with a shining face, to breakfast leisurely till ten. At the same hour Katrinà, soberly arrayed, bade him good-by, and departed pensively with her Bible in her hand. She glanced sometimes a little wistfully at that easy figure there, beginning on one chair in a velvet smoking-jacket and ending on another, in those crimson embroidered slippers of modest fame. A cloud of tobacco smoke rose lazily from behind the great Sunday newspapers in which he was immersed, and in whose discarded sheets she knew that she would find him half-buried and aimably drowsy, on her return. It was the one hour of the week when their sympathies diverged. All other partings of the way were

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without significance to her mind, but this one left her with a certain sadness and sense of faithlessness. She was not quite certain of her duty here: whether as a daughter of the church, she ought to leave him without an appealing or a warning word, to such utter worldliness, on a Lord's Day morning. Yet she doubted, too, that she could find it in her heart to plead with becoming zeal against a leisure in which he took such comfort, and which seemed so harmless after all.

Once, and of his own volition, he had gone to church with her, but had returned, as she regretfully remembered, in a strangely un-Christian frame of mind; and it had then occurred to her, though not without qualms for so unorthodox a conclusion, that it might be wiser for a certain intellectually susceptible type of soul to remain at home. The difficulty on that memorable occasion had been the sermon, which she admitted to herself had been unfortunate that day, for the Rev. Mr. Monday had taken such obvious pains with his little text, had gone, in fact, to such extraordinary and unconscionable length to elucidate what seemed quite clear even to her



YOUNG GIRLS LIKING TO SIT WITH HER

youthful mind, that she found herself flushed and anxious and a little ashamed as he proceeded, feeling, as she confessed afterward, that Mr. Larry's mind was squirming dreadfully, though he sat quite stiffly at her side.

"Why, I didn't even wiggle," he protested.
"How could you have guessed?"

"Oh, I knew — intuitively," she said.

He never offered to go again, and she shrank from asking it, and left him to his Sunday papers and his cigarettes. She returned invariably with friends.

It was a common thing for him as he still sat reading to hear their voices on the outer steps, and it pleased him if they came within, to see how favored his Katrina was — young girls liking to stop and sit with her on the great sofa, chatting and laughing in their silvery fashion as they held her hand, while young men vied with each other in the awkward chivalry of youth. All liked Mr. Larry, who felt a little strange sometimes amid their chatter, remembering how different his own young days had been, how full of work and want and struggle beyond his years; and seeing these spruce young swains with their short

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cropped hair and seasonable attire, he would wonder to himself what the bright-eyed girl who smiled upon them from her sofa throne would think of such a tousel-headed, ill-clad farm-lad as he had been. Would girls nowadays look twice at the lads their fathers were, he wondered, musing of that mysterious goddess who decrees what a maiden's taste shall be in gowns and men. Next morning in "Cap and Bells:"

"I see the short-haired man is coming in," my Delia murmured, glancing at the latest fashion plates.

"Indeed!" said I, thinking of my shaggy youth. "It's very ugly and bull-doggy, don't you think?"

"Dear, no," she answered, "it's awfully chic, and I think I shall have one in the spring."

It was often easier to listen in this musing manner than to join in the converse of Katrina's friends, with its knowing allusions to persons Mr. Larry had never met, or to school-day events, or the scores of the latest foot-ball games, or prophecies of those to come.

S U N D A Y

"I'm getting on in years," he told Katrina with a rueful countenance, and as they went in together to Sunday dinner he groaned rheumatically and with mock cautiousness lowered himself into his chair. "I don't seem to care a cuss which wins," he whined, "Yale or Harvard."

"Why should you? You never went to Yale or Harvard."

He shook his head, and as he carved the chicken he recited to her in a mournful voice:

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset —

Katrina stamped her foot.

"Stop!" she cried. "I won't have you talking so."

"That's Shakespeare."

"I don't care who it is," she retorted. "It gives me the shivers."

"But I do feel old with your young blades, Katrina."

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“Mine!” she replied.

“With all young gallants,” he amended.

“Not with Mr. White, do you?” she inquired.

“Mr. White? You don’t mean Billy White, do you?”

“I do,” she answered. “He walked home with me from church to-day.”

Mr. Larry paused with his carving-knife in the air.

“B-billy White! In *church!*”

“Why, yes,” she replied composedly. “He often comes. He’s a great admirer of Dr. Monday.”

“What! *That* irreverent little cuss!”

“Oh, he isn’t an irreverent little—at all,” Katrina answered. “Why, he sometimes comes to Young Peoples’ Meeting.”

Mr. Larry still stood with the uplifted carver in his hand.

“Really,” Katrina went on earnestly, “he seems to be a very earnest young man. And he is *very* fond of poetry.”

Mr. Larry rested his knife upon the chicken’s breast.

“Billy White,” he said faintly, “is fond of—”

SUNDAY

"Why, yes," she replied. "Didn't you know it? He *loves* the Brownings, and I have just loaned him that dear old copy of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. You seem surprised."

"Oh, no," Mr. Larry assured her. "I'm not surprised. I'm flabbergasted. I'm —"

Unable to find a stronger term, he waved the carving knife instead.

"Why," said Katrina, "I thought that you knew Mr. White?"

"Well, I did — formerly, my love."

"That chicken will be stone cold," she reminded him.

"By George!" he said, more to himself than to Katrina or the chicken, which he began to carve. "You don't tell me. Billy White is fond of poetry! Well, well. What's the world coming to, anyhow? Fond of Browning, you say? Now I'll be —"

"He is a very good talker," Katrina declared. "The way *I* happened to learn of his fondness for poetry was thus: We were walking home from church together — oh, this was months ago — and he asked me in what direction *my* tastes went; and when I said poetry, you should have seen his face!"

KATRINA

"Well," Mr. Larry replied. "Just what am I to infer?"

"Why, it lighted up so."

"Oh, it did, did it?"

"And then he told me," Katrina resumed, "how poetry had always affected him. Oh, he was very modest about it, but I could see that he really had a very unusual mind—that is, of course, as young men's minds go."

"Oh, of course," Mr. Larry agreed, adding beneath his breath, "the darned little beggar."

"*What?*" asked Katrina.

"I was speaking to this chicken," Mr. Larry replied. "It's so damned tough. What surprises me, Katrina, in this matter of Billy White, is how astonishing it is that I should be working in the same office with that young fellow, and not know him as well as you do."

"I suppose," she answered, "he just naturally hesitated to speak about poetry to a man. And *I* believe," she added knowingly, "that he *writes* poetry."

"What makes you think so?"

"He didn't *say* so," Katrina replied; "but I inferred it from a remark he made."

Mr. Larry's eyebrows rose inquiringly, but

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Katrina apparently had finished what she had to say — at least on poetry.

“He wants me to go to the theater with him next Thursday night. Do you object?”

“Not if you don’t,” Mr. Larry answered.

“I think,” she added, a little timidly, but with considerable dignity in her voice, “it might do him good to have me go with him.”

“I’m sure of that,” Mr. Larry said.

“I mean,” she added, her face flushing — “I mean that I believe — I hope, at least — that I have a good influence over him. He used to be sporting-editor, you know, and rather wild, I’m afraid, from what he tells me — and it seems that something I said when I first met him, that day in the office — *you* remember — when you introduced us? — something I said really affected him very seriously.”

Mr. Larry had pricked up his ears.

“Something *you* said,” he remarked.

“Yes, something I said about his having better assignments some day. It seems that it really affected him *very* seriously, so that he’s never been the same since. He lost all taste for sport, he told me, and from that very day,

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it seems, he has devoted himself to — well, to higher things.”

“In fact,” said Katrina, but smiling at the memory of so much absurdity, “the boy is *so* grateful, and so foolish about it, he declares up and down that it was *I* who reformed him, by what I said that day. Fancy!”

But Mr. Larry replied with the utmost seriousness.

“I think it quite possible, my love — quite possible. I was not aware of it myself, but, as I told you, I am growing old. Oh, I am! I am, Katrina! I find that my eyesight is growing dim.”

IX

THE ONE DREAM LEFT

THERE had been the usual February thaws, and in early March rain had fallen, though not in such showers as to warrant Mr. Larry's mud-encrusted shoes. Every other evening he came home late, sadly bedraggled, not, however, with the filthy stains from city cross-walks, but with the fine clean clay of country roads.

"Whatever do you do," Katrina asked, brushing at his coat, "to get yourself so spattered?"

"Oh," he replied, "I've been investigating a little suburban matter. By George, Katrina, that makes me think! I picked some pussy-willows for you — and left them somewhere. Now where did I leave those pussy-willows?"

He stood with a slipper in each hand.

"I must have dropped them, or I must have laid them down when I — I know — when I was a-poking around that wood-chuck's hole! Yes sir, I saw a wood-chuck, Katrina! By

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George, I did! The old devil was sitting on a stone wall, big as life and twice as natural, but Lord Harry! by the time I got there — ”

Mr. Larry tugged wrathfully at his water-logged shoes.

“What chance has an old — curmudgeon like me — in a swamp — with a wood-chuck?”

“But weren’t you afraid he’d bite?” Katrina asked, wondering what manner of beast a wood-chuck was. Mr. Larry pouted like a boy.

“Naw!”

“Spring’s really on the way, isn’t it!” she exclaimed.

“You’d think so,” he replied, “if you could hear the blue-birds, and the robins, and the song-sparrows, and meadow-larks — *I* tell you!” He waved his hands to indicate the flight of wings. “The air is full of them. The moles are ploughing, and crops look fine.”

“Crops! Isn’t it rather early for crops?”

“Not for skunk cabbage,” he replied. “It flourisheth by the water-brooks. It springeth up and is glad. Yea, it skippeth like the little hills. And the cherry’s in bud, and the sap’s meandering — all the hedges are auburn-

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haired. And the turf's mellow," he added ruefully, gazing at his discarded shoes. "By George, if I'd a-had Parker's dog — hey? What are you laughing at?"

"Why, at you," Katrina explained. "You're like a small boy."

"Sure!" he replied. "I feel like one — or did to-day, deviling that wood-chuck. I tried everything; poked with young trees and barked like a dog. I did, really. Didn't you ever hear a dog after a wood-chuck, Katrina?" He sank back wearily in his chair.

"Wasn't the wind cold?" she asked.

"Keen," he replied; "but you could feel spring just behind."

That suburban matter — some *Herald* assignment, Katrina fancied — was not to be settled in a day, or many days, and Mr. Larry's evening muddiness continued with a frequency that became a matter of regret on Katrina's part, for while she was concerned to the extent of a broom-brush in this mystery, she must be content, it seemed, with evasive answers and voluble accounts of the growth of spring. Before All Fool's Day Mr. Larry had waxed eloquent over snakes and caterpillars, over but-

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terflies and red squirrels frisking among the rocks, and with the advent of April's flowery course he brought her hepaticas, rue anemones, and handfuls of meadow violets to atone somewhat for these pleasures which he never invited her to share. Twice, on little excursions of her own with more thoughtful friends, they saw him pass, oblivious alike to calls and handkerchiefs, on his country quest.

Had they been in Fairhampton on the last afternoon in April they might have seen Mr. Larry descend suddenly from a suburban car. Now Fairhampton, twenty miles from the City Hall, was then — is still, please God! — an unimproved and altogether lovely pastoral spot without Additions of any kind whatever. Subdivision was a crime unknown. Real estate poets had not yet appeared. There were no Hollywoods — without holly trees; no Windermeres, without the water to float a lily pad; no Bonnybraes without a brae to climb. It was a Saturday when Mr. Larry came to town, and found it bustling with country carts. There was only one garrulous little street of shops, quieting down as it passed the parson's and running on under whispering leaves and

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between old houses till it met the brook, where it leaped the waters at a single bound of ancient wagon-bridge and sunned itself among the farms.

At the bridge Mr. Larry lingered out of pure delight, reading on its weather-beaten railing the initials and dates of lovers' trysts, and leaning there, listening to the music of waters below him and of unseen birds above his head, the spirit moved him and he fell to writing on a little pad. First, on the corner of the leaf: "Katrina, Sugg. for Chap. IV," and then, with many crossings out and criss-crossings of words and phrases till he got them right:—

On mild spring evenings, if one is young enough and fond of the scent of lilacs, he may walk thus bridgeward to watch the stars sparkling above and tremulous below him; and leaning then upon the railing—if only he hath taken thought to provide himself against the loneliness of a spot so tranquil in the night-time—he may vary astronomy with other mysteries, so that the place is called Lovers' Loll to this very day. There is nothing to fear there, not even a belated farmer's wagon, which is bound by courtesy

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to send forth an early, respectful, warning rattle ere it trundles nigh, even as natives walking that way and seeing two figures dimly athwart the sky, are wont in a kindly spirit of humanity to develop symptoms of a bronchial affection natural enough in such dampish spots. Love, then, may be said to flourish in Farmington, owing partly to these natural advantages of the place and partly to the Farmington girls themselves, who are so kindly disposed to sociability, and so fond of scenery and stars.

Mr. Larry now sauntered back, choosing the by-streets and examining the yards and houses as he passed. He stopped frequently, pleased by some vista of sunlit meadow through a haze of leaves. Pink clouds hovered here and there — flowers of the peach. The cherry blossoms were full of bees, and the mild wind came to him so sweetly laden that he stopped in an ecstasy to inhale that delectable promise of pies-to-be. But coming by chance into the long main street again he strode at once to the center of the town, and crossing between the farmers' wagons, passed instantly beneath a faded sign.

He reappeared accompanied by an elderly

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little bearded gentleman in gold-bowed spectacles and a broad-brimmed hat, a grave personage though somewhat seedy of attire, whose part in the conversation appeared just now to be sundry very knowing nods as he led the way from the business portion of the town. They had not gone far, however, Mr. Larry talking and gesticulating with marked earnestness, before the citizen had found his voice.

"I see," he said, "you don't care especially about the farm part."

"It is not essential to our happiness," Mr. Larry replied, "though we'd like a few acres hanging around and looking pleasant, you understand."

"Well, there's the Stevens' farm," said the little man. "Sightly place, too. Right opposite the cemetery."

Mr. Larry glanced curiously at his companion.

"No," he said, "I don't think, Mr. Dowling, I could ever feel at home in a place like that."

"It's the Protestant cemetery," suggested the little man.

Mr. Larry hesitated — a decent interval, out of respect.

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"N-no," he said, "though I admit there's force in what you say."

"How about the Wilson place?" Mr. Dowling suggested. "Eighty acres of the best—"

"No," Mr. Larry interposed, "we want something modest, you know — something flowery — something with bushes to it — scraggledy orchard — little old house, you understand — older the better."

Mr. Dowling cogitated to the extent of a block.

"Don't want a big place, you say?" he finally managed to remark.

Mr. Larry looked grave.

"That," he said, "was the meaning I intended to convey."

"I'll tell you," said the little man more cheerfully, "old Lady Jordan might sell, if you'd rent her half the house. It's a big place. Plenty of room for two families. There's only her and Sara, her invalid daughter."

"What appears to be the matter with Sara?" Mr. Larry inquired.

"Don't just know. Some kind of spells, but nothing dangerous, I guess — plain, ordinary fits of some kind."

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Mr. Larry stared.

“Just fits, you say?”

“Well, yes.”

Mr. Larry made no reply.

“Don’t just take to the idea?” Mr. Dowling suggested.

“Well, no,” said Mr. Larry.

“Say, how’d the Rogers place do? By thunder, I never thought of that. *Elegant* big place! Eighteen rooms. Barn ties up twenty head if you like.”

Mr. Larry paused in the middle of the walk and fixed the little gentleman with his eye.

“Say, Dowling, you’ve heard ‘Home Sweet Home,’ haven’t you? And ‘The Old Oaken Bucket?’ And ‘Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?’”

Mr. Dowling considered.

“Well, yes.”

“Exactly,” said Mr. Larry. “Now, Dowling, that’s what I want. I want the littlest, oldest-fashionest place you’ve got in Fairhampton. I want to buy it, and fix it over, and live there all the rest of my life — and then be buried right alongside you in that Protestant cemetery.”

Mr. Dowling stared.

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"There must be a place like that in Fairhampton," Mr. Larry went on. "Why, I've seen a dozen, myself."

"Dang it, there *is*," Mr. Dowling agreed with sudden heartiness. "Now that I come to think of it, I know just the place you mean."

He set off promptly at a nimbler pace, and with boundless assurances. The house, he said, was around the corner a little piece, and adjacent to stores, churches, the trolley, the cemetery (Protestant) and the public schools. Could be purchased cheap. Bargain, in fact. Owner obliged to sell on account of old age. Shade? Oh, yes. Oceans of shade. More shade than anybody'd want, in fact. Bushes? M — yes, bushes too; nice bushes. Yes, good well; *excellent* water. Grass? Land, yes; plenty of grass; more grass than you could shake a stick at. Pleasant neighbors. Lovely view. Livery stable handy — right across the street, in fact. Wouldn't need to keep your own horse. Wouldn't pay to keep your own horse with a livery stable right in front of you.

"Now, there!" Mr. Dowling said, pausing in his walk and smiling for the first time as he

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pointed with a rheumatic forefinger. "Answers your description to a T."

"Does, doesn't it?" he repeated. Presently he spoke again:

"I say it does, doesn't it?"

"I wouldn't call that an old house," Mr. Larry replied quietly.

"Old!" cried Mr. Dowling. "I should say not! Old? Why, man, that house isn't sixteen years old, to my knowledge. Yes, sir. Guess, I know. Built it myself."

He paused triumphantly.

"Why, it's as good as new. I'll bet you there ain't a leak in that roof. Plumbing's first class, *to-day*."

"My dear friend," Mr. Larry replied, "if I could only impress you with the fact that what I want is a —"

"Why, man," Mr. Dowling broke in, "that's a *genuine* Queen Anne cottage! Yes, sir."

"I know it," Mr. Larry groaned. "My dear sir, I know it. I repeat: *I know it.*"

"Well, so do I," Mr. Dowling declared with some little heat. "And *I ought* to know it, I guess. I said I built it, didn't I?"

"Yes, but my dear fellow," Mr. Larry re-

plied, “I hate — I despise — I loathe — *all* Queen Anne cottages, without exception. What I wanted — what I’m trying to get through your head is —”

“Why, what’s the matter with *that* house?” Mr. Dowling inquired.

Mr. Larry paused grimly.

“My dear Dowling,” he said, “there are one million seven hundred and ninety-six thousand four hundred and fifty-three Queen Anne cottages in the United States! I’m the only man — *the only man*, Dowling, who doesn’t like them. And I know that house. I’ve been in it fourteen thousand and ninety-eight times already. I know it like a book. I know where they put the piano. I know where the parson stands when he reads the burial service. The coffin, Dowling, can only set one way in a house like that! And I can see the mourners stepping back into the dining room to let the pall-bearers out the front door. Don’t you see? Don’t you see why I hate, and loathe, and despise that house? Look there: There’s another house like it; and another over there, all built in the tail end of this misguided century. I don’t blame Queen

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Anne, you understand, Dowling, but our grandfathers never built a house like that. Why, look over there! See that nice little long-roofed, weather-beaten thing behind the lilacs? Hasn't been painted in fifty years, praise God! Now who lives there?"

"Oh, the Buxtons live there," Mr. Dowling replied. "Two old-maid sisters that take in dressmaking."

"Blest Buxtons!" Mr. Larry murmured. "Would they sell, do you think?"

"Sell! The Buxtons!" Mr. Dowling repeated. "Why, that was their father's place, and their grandfather's before him."

"Well, who owns that house with the red bush in front of it, and the plants in the windows?"

"Frank Perley lives there," was the reply. "He's our carpenter."

"Happy carpenter!" Mr. Larry replied. "See the milk pans drying in the sun! And I'm dog-goned if those aren't pies in that buttery window!"

"Looks some like pies," Mr. Dowling admitted.

"Dowling," Mr. Larry cried, "*our* folks had a place like that!"

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He continued to regard it for some moments with a kindling eye.

"There ain't any architecture about *that* place, as far as I see can," the agent remarked.

"Yes, isn't it delightful," Mr. Larry said.
"Would Perley sell, do you think?"

"Not this side of Kingdom Come," Mr. Dowling replied, and Mr. Larry nodded.

"I have always observed," he said, as they turned away, "that whenever I find a nice little old green-and-gold place like that, some poor man owns it — and you couldn't buy it for love or money. Dowling, you can't buy houses that have pies in their windows! — can you?"

Mr. Dowling considered.

"Well, no," he said.

They were walking under elms whose boughs were musical with the songs of mating birds, Mr. Dowling complacent, Mr. Larry weary and depressed. He was thinking of Katrina, and whether or not he should tell her that night of his fruitless wanderings.

"By George, Dowling! Look at that!"

"What?"

"That! That house there!"

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“Where?”

“There! It’s for sale! *By George*, I’ve found it!”

Mr. Larry’s steps quickened. He had reached the gate before Mr. Dowling had got within ear-shot.

“Why,” said the agent, puffing up, “you wouldn’t live here!”

“The hell I wouldn’t!”

“Why, I knew of this. Never dreamed you’d look at it. The house isn’t fit for niggers to live in. T’wont bring more’n seven dollars a month.”

“So much the better,” Mr. Larry replied, dodging a lilac branch that swung across the path.

“ ‘Taint got a bath-room!”

“Bath-room! who wants a bath-room? Give me a bucket out under the lilacs every time.”

“Cellar’s damp,” Mr. Dowling observed.

“Cellars,” Mr. Larry retorted, “most generally are. But look at that roof! Just look at it! See that moss there, Dowling? Confound you, *that’s* what I tried to get into your blooming head. Heavens, man, look at the bushes. *Look* at the bushes! Look at that

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red-headed fellow there? What d'ye call it? Japanese quince? And that! — that yellow fellow, man. Oh, that's Flowering Currant, eh? And lilacs till you can't rest! And honeysuckles! And gooseberries! Pies, man! That means pies! And look at the well! I'll bet there's moss on the bucket."

"There ain't any bucket," Dowling remarked, "as far's I can see."

"Well then, we'll buy one, moss and all. Look at the view you get from the front stoop, Dowling! There isn't a cemetery or a livery stable in the whole horizon. By George, did you hear me say 'stoop?' Why, I haven't said 'stoop' since I was a boy! You can see the whole valley. Barn's all right, too; big enough for our establishment. We must get at that garden right away. I'll bet there isn't a finer white oak in all Fairhampton than that one there. George, smell those lilacs! Are those willows on our place? There must be a stream there. So! Why, Dowling, *this* is the place I've been singing hymns about all afternoon!"

"Place may be all right," the agent admitted; "but the house is rotten."

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“Why, man, it’s a glorious house — glorious! Stand off — here. Just see the lovely slope of the roof there! — with the oak hanging over it. And the dormer window. And the moss on the shingles, and the sun on the moss. See the vines on the window, and over the stoop, and along the lattice. And look at the path there, meandering off under the grape arbor. *You* think I’m mad! Why, man, I guess you’ve never lived eight hours a day with ‘Champagne Soap — Five Cents a Bar’ a-staring at you from a red-brick wall across the alley — eh? You’ve never sat there April mornings knowing that just such earthly Edens as this is, *do* exist — eh? You’ve never had to find *your* springs in four darned little English sparrows teetering on a telegraph wire!”

Mr. Dowling laughed. It was his first that afternoon.

“Well,” he said, “I’m glad you like the place, mister.”

“Who has the key?” Mr. Larry inquired, peering in at the living room window.

“Mrs. Bell has. She owns the place. She’s down to the city visiting her daughter,

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and she won't be back till the half-past seven car."

"Well, it doesn't much matter," Mr. Larry replied, trying one cob-webbed window after another. "I can see pretty well."

"The parlor and sitting-room are combined, Mr. Dowling remarked; "but you could put in a partition."

"What do I want with a partition?" Mr. Larry grumbled. "By George, this little room here will do for a study!"

"Floors ain't level," Mr. Dowling remarked drily; "but a man of your enthusiasm ought to kind of make 'em do — for a-while anyway."

"You wait and see, Dowling. You wait till we've scrubbed this place up, and put new paper on the walls, and hung up our curtains, and our blue plates, and our Ideal Heads, and our Landseer dogs, and our Raphael Madonna of the Old Oaken Bucket! Wait till we've got our rugs on the floor, and our Waverlies on the shelf! You'll see, Dowling. And you'll see something else! You'll see what'll make you forget the lake in the cellar, and the waves in the floor! You'll see the prettiest

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little woman *you* ever saw, keeping things tidy and having the Ruth and Naomi Sewing Circle in to tea!"

Mr. Dowling laughed. It was the second time that afternoon.

"Guess you're right," said he, good-humoredly.

Mr. Larry nodded.

"Guess I am. She'll come out to-morrow and O.K. the deal. It's an old dream of ours, to own this place." He glanced at the sky. It was a blaze of orange behind the vines. "Sunset," he said. "Dowling, I can't get home to dinner. I'll telephone in—and stay and see Mrs. Bell."

When Mr. Larry arrived from Fairhampton it was a clear and moonlit night. The air was moist and fragrant with the springtime as he passed eagerly under the maples of Abercrombie Street, and through the gate, which he closed sharply to announce his coming, and up the steps, which he cleared at a single bound, like a schoolboy home from play. Smiling to himself, he opened the door. He had hoped that Katrina would be behind it,

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but the hall was empty, and the house silent. Thrice he called to her, and stood, strangely breathless, listening for her answer. She was not in the study; she was not in the kitchen, nor was Mrs. Jerrold there; the dishes had been put away.

With a murmur of disappointment he went up-stairs. Her door was open, and he stopped on the threshold of her room, marking the perfect order there, the snow-white counterpane, the unruffled pillow, her dressing table with its oval mirror, and the shining silver reflected in its shadowy depths, and over all the moonshine falling like a bridal veil.

"No wonder, on a night like this," he said, and turned away. He was still in his coat and hat, which he now remembered and left below. Still by moonlight, he found his slippers, opened a box of cigarettes, and sank back, smoking, in his chair.

"Dear child!" he sighed. "She'll be surprised."

The afternoon passed pleasantly through his memory, and the humor of it caused him to lounge there comfortably awhile, but the joy of its success, and his eagerness to tell his



"HAPPY DEARS"

THE ONE DREAM LEFT

story, brought him to his feet again and set him pacing up and down the floor.

"She'll be surprised, dear child . . . wouldn't know the Garden of Eden, Dowling wouldn't, though he lived next door to it . . . she'll be surprised! . . ."

The clock struck ten. Going to the window he threw it open. The moon rode higher in the heavens, its brightness quenching the nearer stars. Voices came to him on the soft night air, murmuring voices, a man's and woman's, out of the shadows of the street. Now they came nearer, now slowly faded, and died away, only to return, and fade, and die again in the leafy distance. Mr. Larry smiled, half-scornfully.

"Happy dears!" he said, and turned away.

He was too restless to watch the sky. He smoked incessantly, pacing up and down, and planning how the house should be bought and put in order, and where he would do his writing mornings, in the open air, and how with his own hands he would restore the arbor among the lilacs, for Katrina to sew in and serve her callers with cakes and tea.

The gate clicked.

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“There!” he said, hastening to the door — but the steps passed on, and around the porch. It was Mrs. Jerrold.

He looked at his watch. It was half-past ten.

“Strange!” he muttered. “Could anything — ? Nonsense.”

Yet his heart leaped joyfully and with a great relief, when he heard her voice at the gate. He had planned to meet her at the door, — on the porch, perhaps, — but at the sound of her step upon the walk, he wavered. He had meant to greet her with a grave, even a reproachful air, at first, but she found him grinning, and fumbling with the lamp.

“H’lo,” he said. “Is that you?”

“Hello,” she answered, very softly. “Are you lighting the lamp?”

“Yes, I’m — ”

He paused to command himself.

“ — lighting the lamp.”

She slipped quietly into a chair.

“I guess,” she began, a little breathlessly, “you thought I’d run away.”

“Oh, no,” he replied. “I knew you were --- somewhere.”

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“It’s the loveliest night!” she sighed.

“I know it,” he answered. “I got in from Fairhampton about half-past nine. Thought I’d wait up for you.”

“What seems to be the matter with the lamp?” she asked.

“Nothing,” he said.

“But you take so long about it.”

His grin widened.

“Do I?”

“And you seem so — so jolly.”

“Do I?” he asked, turning down the wick — and turning it up again. Then he burst out chuckling, and for the first time looked her fairly in the face.

Katrina was scarlet.

“Oh, I think you’re *horrid!*” she said.

Mr. Larry gasped.

“Horrid!”

“Yes, I do! Nobody has any *business* to listen!” she declared.

“Listen!”

“Yes, to *listen!* I suppose you’ve heard everything we said!”

She was crushing her handkerchief fiercely between her palms.

K A T R I N A

“Listen, Katrina? Listen to what?”

“Oh, you needn’t deny it! You’ve been snickering ever since I came! You think I’m angry. I’m not *half* so angry as William will be. And it *was* mean of you. You *know* it was mean. You *know* it was.”

The child was crying!

“Good God, Katrina! William! — you! — why, I haven’t heard anything!”

She raised her eyes — stared at him — smiled at him through her tears.

“Oh! Haven’t you?” she asked eagerly.

“No!”

She bent like a flower before his face.

“Well, then, I’ve — I’ve come to tell you — Mr. Larry.”

THE END

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